

The SPUR of DANGER

CC HOTCHKISS

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I can see her now, her fine eyes wide open in surprise, her beautiful hair streaming over her shoulders

THE SPUR OF DANGER

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THE RED PAPER, ETC.

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NEW YORK
GROSSET & DUNLAP
PUBLISHERS

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PART I

CHAPTER I

JUDGE EVERE

“**H**ATS off to his honor, the judge of the king’s assize!” So rang out the call of the bailiff, and at the same time I heard the rustle of the judge’s silken robe as he entered the court-room through the side door. But among the entire assembly I doubt if half a dozen hats came off. Those of us who were aware of what was in the wind remained covered, though it took more than common courage to thus fly into the face of an honorable custom.

It was a tense moment to me, ringleader as I was, but being sure of my backing and the temper of my fellow townsmen, I did not abate an atom of determination. With the bailiff’s words my cue was given me. I looked around for my father, but he was not present, being wise, and having an inkling of what was toward, and so I carried out the

program allotted me. Raising my voice so that it might not be unheard throughout the room, I shouted:

“ Any man who takes off his hat in this court will be considered an enemy to the colonies ! ”

Of course Justice Evers heard this as plainly as any one else, but without a hitch to his dignity he went on his way to the bench as if he had heard nothing, though his thin lips were twitching as he took his seat with grave deliberation. A portentous silence fell on the gathering, and for a moment nothing could be heard save a slight shuffling of feet on the bare floor, hardly noise enough to drown the tick of the great clock over the dais. No court of law within his majesty’s realm had ever been thus flouted.

But something of it must have been foreseen by Judge Evers, unless he was wholly a fool. It had been a cold welcome that had met him when he drove up to the tavern the day before, he and his clerk, the high chaise lurching in the frozen ruts of the road. Not a cold welcome because only the weather was bitter and there was none to mark his arrival; for a goodly gathering was about the tavern waiting for him, though when his clerk descended from the vehicle and assisted my lord of the king’s assize to the ground, where he stood looking at the crowd in distant, high-nosed pride, not a hand was held out to him, not a voice was lifted, not a forward step taken by one of the

waiting townsmen, and we are a substantial people.

Now, let it be known that we of Barrington, like others of the towns about us, were a law-abiding community, fearing God and strictly attending to our own affairs, the right having been granted by charter long before George III. had been either born or thought of, and for that matter, neither had his father before him. But when his majesty took from us our ancient privileges and through the governor removed our duly elected judges for creatures of his own to be paid from his own purse, the blood of every self-respecting colonist began to riot, and that heat, heightened by other causes, had grown and spread until the whole political pot was nigh to boiling over. And so, no emissary of his majesty's might look for a public welcome throughout the length and breadth of Massachusetts.

Judge Evers stood in the biting March wind for a moment, one hand drawing his flapping cloak about him, the other holding on his cocked hat; but no man offering to assist him, and neither mine host, Bailing, nor even the hostler, appearing, his honor let go something I thought was an oath, and, his horse being finally hitched, he set his thin, blue lips and marched up the tavern steps, the silent crowd opening to let him and his clerk go through. Had not the man been a fatuous ass he would have scented the brewing storm and climbed

back into his chaise to be driven elsewhere, for in any other town he were safer than in Barrington, the home of my father, Judge Darcy, the late occupant of the bench who had been deposed by Gage, though he had been the choice of the people for term after term.

I stood by the tavern door as the obsequious clerk opened it for his high and mightiness, and in the hall the judge came face to face with my father, who as his predecessor was properly waiting for him, but who would not advance one step over the threshold to greet him. I can see the whole group now: my father in his snowy wig, his long coat, his small-clothes of plum-colored plush, and his cloak over one arm, standing tall and dignified as he waited, hat in hand; and Judge Evers, looking like a child beside him, all in black save for his powdered wig, his temper showing in his sharp nose and snapping black eyes. Behind him stood his clerk with a portmante and a black bag, and the half-dozen men who had crowded after me into the wide hall. My father took one step forward and held out his hand.

“This is Mr. Justice Evers?” he said, pleasantly enough, but I noticed his face was very serious, though for that matter he had not laughed since the death of my mother, ten years before.

“I am Justice Evers, sir,” returned the smaller man, with a snap to each word. “And I take it, you are Judge Darcy.” He said this loftily and

after a perfunctory shake of my father's hand, but without removing his hat. My father immediately covered his head, and was followed suit by every man in the hall save the clerk, for we had uncovered as we entered. The newcomer was not blind to the act. He swelled visibly. "I wish to protest at this deliberate show of disrespect toward a king's justice!" he said, in a voice that trembled. "I wish to protest against this damnable reception! I come here to administer the law and am treated like an insolvent farmer; I, a judge of the king's bench! Not even the landlord appears to welcome me, nor a hostler to do me service! What is behind this, sir?"

"Did you not receive my letter of warning, Judge Evers?" asked my father, looking down at the man before him, his mild blue eyes taking on an expression at which, as a boy, I had often trembled.

"I did, sir — I did. And had it not been well intended I would cite the writer before me and commit him at once for contempt — for contempt, sir."

My father did not move, but something passed over his face the like of which I had never seen. I looked for an explosion, but no such thing was forthcoming from him; instead, with his glance still fixed on the pompous little man, he returned very quietly:

“Sir, if you will follow my present advice, also well intended, you will not attempt to hold court in this town to-morrow. You must be aware that in all directions the royal power is denied, and that your decrees would not be respected, even if nothing worse befall. Were you wise you would leave Barrington to-night.”

I thought that Evers’ clerk, who stood behind his master, was about to fall to the floor, for he dropped the portmantle and fairly staggered back.

“By the glory of the king, sir, this is constructive treason!” exclaimed Evers. “Not hold court! Neglect my duty through fear! By God, sir, you forget that as a king’s justice I have the king’s forces behind me! Let me but scent violence and Gage shall know of it!”

My father smiled. It made the little man bristle.

“I mean it, sir! With a couple of regiments Gage could sweep Massachusetts from end to end and punish its inhabitants without the loss of a man! Who is there in this town dare lift a hand against an appointed judge?”

“You are beside yourself, Judge Evers,” returned my father, “and, moreover, here is no place for a discussion of this nature.”

“You are right!” was the irascible reply, as the little judge wheeled on his cowering clerk. “Dilly, search out the landlord of this tavern and demand proper quarters. We have found our-

self in an uncivilized community — in a swarming nest of open rebels that might out-treason those of Boston! Gage shall be informed — by gad, he shall!"

My father made no reply, but with an expression of infinite contempt threw his cloak over his shoulders and, with a surprised glance at seeing me present, left the house. I followed him. How well Judge Evers slept that night I know not, being deeply engaged with a number of my townsmen at the house of one of them and not getting home until late; but if he did sleep it was because he was proof against the hootings that came from beneath his window, and against the noise of unusual revelry which swelled from the bar of the tavern. So, though he was plucky enough, surely the man, puffed up though he was, could not have been unprepared for the scene in court.

But we of the town — or most of us — were prepared.

For all my confidence I felt the enormity of the thing I had done as well as the thing I yet had to do; and there was a catch in my throat as I realized the stubbornness, or perhaps spirit, of the man who had taken his seat and now leaned forward on his desk and quietly flashed his black eyes over the defiant crowd beneath him. The handful of bewigged lawyers, all of whom were strangers in town, had been arranging their papers before the judge entered, but at my call they drew

together as if they were suddenly alive to a danger. His honor waited as if weighing his words, then he spoke, and there was suppression in his voice as he said:

“ This court is not deaf. It heard the remark — the defiance of some one representing the rebellious part of this community; and he seems prepared to defy the king through his justice. It shall not be tolerated, but before proceeding further in this matter I demand that every hat be removed in honor of his majesty’s court of law.”

I noticed one or two hands lift, but they came down again without uncovering — all but one — the hand of Ike Manners, the town fool, who took off the hat he wore and gave vent to a sudden hysterical laugh that sounded loudly through the silent room.

Judge Evers’ pale face — pale save for his thin, blue jaw, turned livid. If he had then and there adjourned court and formally deprived us of process of law during his circuit he would have been within his rights and done much to spike our guns; but instead, being a man of more bravery than sense, he shot out his hand and pointing to Ike, who in his lack of wit would laugh at a funeral sooner than at a joke, he thundered:

“ Bailiff, bring that man before me! These people need an example!”

And the bailiff, with his staff of office in his hand, got command of his legs, and taking the

unresisting Ike by the shoulder pushed him to the bar, and no man interfered to stop him. Manners, with his knees trembling, stood looking vacantly around, his feeble mouth half-open in a semi-idiotic smile. I knew that now something was expected of me; but I waited, meanwhile getting a grip on myself.

“Fellow,” said Evers, wagging a menacing forefinger at the thoroughly frightened Ike, “you have chosen, abetted by some of your kind, to insult your king through me, his officer. For that I commit you to the common jail for thirty days.” Then his honor stood up and drew his slim figure to its full height. “And each and every man in this room who does not instantly remove his hat I will commit for contempt of court for the same period. Bailiff, lock the doors of this room.”

By then my time had come and I knew that nigh every eye in the townhall was looking at me expectantly. If ever a man was urged it was I, and I usually need no urging in any matter I undertake. Detaching myself from the crowd, I stepped into the space before the bench and by the side of the scared Ike.

“Judge Evers, you may begin on me, if you like,” I said, lifting my hand and settling my hat firmly on my head. “Here I stand covered. Commit me, as you will, and then get your sentence carried out; ay, even show the commitment paper. We care nothing for your words. You

are no judge of ours. You were warned that you would be resisted in Barrington, and now we say that no court shall be here held save by a justice selected by our people. Such an one may command our respect."

I said this quietly enough, having the night before rehearsed the substance of it when I had been selected to deliver this valedictory (perhaps because of my bigness of body) and open the ball.

And the ball was now open. The bailiff, who was on his way to the door, stopped short and listened open-mouthed; the little clerk turned pale; Judge Evers looked at me from head to foot, and I think that then he for the first time realized the depth to which the thing had gone.

"What is your name, you son of Anak?" he demanded, and I could not help thinking of Judge Jeffries, of the "bloody assize" as I looked at his gleaming eyes.

"Allen Darcy, sir."

"Ha! The son of Judge Darcy, late of the kings' bench?"

"I am."

"By God, I might have surmised it — and all the rest. The animus of this rebellious proceeding is now plain. My predecessor resents the loss of his seat and thinks that the size of his son may intimidate us. Ay, I saw something of it in his attitude yesterday. This shall be probed and he be made to suffer with you. I shall order him

brought before us and shall commit him, also, sir. I shall teach him that jealousy —”

He got no farther, for his reference to my parent (who had but a small idea of what was toward) maddened me. He would commit my father, would he! I took a stride forward and reaching over the desk seized the man by the front of his silk robe.

“ Come from the bench, thou unjust judge! ” I cried, and without great exertion I dragged him from the dais and on to the floor in front of the bar. At the same moment hands were laid on the bailiff, the clerk’s pen was torn from him and his papers dashed to the floor. All was confusion in an instant. Court attendants, scenting more trouble, dug into the crowd and were lost to sight, and a babel of noise took the place of the recent quiet. Through the muss and excitement I stood holding fast to Justice Evers. At last I saw that things were getting beyond me. I bent my mouth to the ear of my prisoner.

“ Sir, ” said I, “ this, to you, smacks of unseemly conduct, and so it is. But you now know the temper of these people for whom I was selected to act. As for yourself, beyond your office, I have no feeling, and so will go so far as to say that if you dare ascend the bench in Barrington or put into writing any decree or commitment, you will forever regret it. And more, sir. If you and your followers are not beyond the town limits by

sunset this day I fear me a coat of tar-and-feathers will take the place of other covering, and you will take your departure astride a rail. My father, whom you would commit, knows nothing of what was intended. He warned you once, having heard mutterings, and now you are warned by his son. Go."

So saying I pushed him into the hall and loosened my hold on him, motioning back those who crowded around. Never a word of threat or anything else did the little man return, now being really frightened; but he gathered up his torn gown, and giving me a fiery glance I shall not soon forget, fled from the building. We let him go.

He went from town by noon that day, bound for I know not where, and little did I dream I would ever see him again; but when I did, God wot things were very different than upon that windy day in March.

CHAPTER II

THE OPENING

SPRING came with a rush in the year of grace, 1775; but I thought little of the weather, the time being agog with the promise of great events. Affairs in Barrington moved quietly, even sluggishly, and without much form of law. Our ears were trimmed for news from the east, though what we heard from Boston drifted to us like a faint echo and hardly disturbed us slumbering among the Berkshire hills. If the Governor-General, Gage, was awake to what we had done to Judge Evers he had taken no action, neither had we heard of or from the doughty little justice since the day I dragged him from the bench.

And now it was past mid-April. The land was big with its promise of early spring and the woods, usually bleak and bare until after May has come, were filled with the odor of the earth and the tenderness of swelling buds, and the scent of arbutus. Something in the softening air stirred me to be up and doing instead of taking the days as they came and lolling in the growing heat of the noon sun.

But I had no taste for my father's profession, caring less for Law than for Justice and considering it strange that the two were not always found hand in hand. Nor did I know exactly what I wished save to get from the town in which I seemed wasting my life and the education I had received at Harvard.

Not that I felt superior to my fellows, save, perhaps, in brawn, but that my blood was all for action and my eyes for a wider horizon than that of hill-encompassed Barrington, home though it was. It was the discontent of a young man, the longing of a dreamer; and yet I was no dreamer.

Now, I had taken stock of myself and knew at least what I did not wish to become. First, I am no patient plodder. As I have said, the Law held no attraction for me, and as for the Ministry I fear me that my breadth of opinion would forever bar me from the pulpit. The Army? What army could I join save that of England? and I hated England and things English although an English subject. A pedagogue? God forbid! I lacked the essential of patience with stupidity.

And so, there was nothing left for me but medicine, and, as I thought of it, it seemed that nothing could be nobler than its profession, tinctured, as it is, by all the other professions. My bent lay there if anywhere, and I had spoken of it to my father though he had said little to encourage me. No way was clear in any line; I felt I was rusting

out; and though my father was a wealthy man, as men go, and I was his sole heir, it galled me to be eating his bread at my age and making no return therefor.

But my hour struck at last; for one day after he had been closeted with a stranger, whom I did not even see, my father called me to his study, and I knew by the expression of his face that something had happened or was about to happen. When I went into the book-lined room the first things I saw were two letters lying on the table — two letters sealed — and both were addressed to Samuel Adams, Esq., of Boston. I seated myself and waited for what was coming.

“Allen,” said my father, “I have long seen your dissatisfaction at your present mode of life; until now I have been unable to secure a substitute for it that would meet with your wishes or mine. But matters are now ripe for action. I am going to send you to Boston at once. I have made arrangements with Doctor Joseph Warren for you to call upon him and if possible make arrangements to enter his office and learn his profession. Only this morning the post brought his definite consent to my proposal. I know you will second me in this.”

I caught my breath sharply. “Ay,” I returned; then something, perhaps of the future, suddenly oppressed me and I got no farther.

“It seems that Doctor Warren is well ac-

quainted with your desperate exploit," continued my parent, "and commends you for it; it has influenced him in your favor. But the times are askew, Allen. The embargo on Boston has about ruined the city, and I fear that the doctor can give you as little attention as he does his practice; he has just been commissioned a general by congress. However, you are to see him and make arrangements for the future."

"Thank Heaven!" I ejaculated, for I had never dared to look as high as Doctor Warren. "And does he say anything of affairs in Boston?"

"It is quiet enough on the surface, the doctor writes; but he says that while all may seem stagnant there is a violent undercurrent. He fears that Gage, knowing the activity of the committee of safety, will make an armed raid into the country, and he dreads the result. It would mean open war."

"Let it so be!" I cried, in my enthusiasm. "Two enemies will never be friends until they come to blows!"

"War is the last desperate act of the unthinking," returned my father. "Only rarely is it fought for a principle or by those who know what they are fighting for. My son, patriotism is an abused word; to most it means only a rifle and the excitement of the man-hunt; but this war, if it comes, is surely justified as self-defense and freedom are justified even though obtained by violence.

However, this brings me to another matter and in line with your trip to Boston."

My father picked up the two letters from the table and balanced them in his hand as if weighing their contents. "These are for Mr. Samuel Adams," he said. "They were left by a courier this day, being sent to me under cover as one of the committee of correspondence. They are from Doctor Benjamin Franklin and are very important. I have been made responsible for their rapid delivery, and so, Allen, my son, you are to be their bearer. I wish to admonish you to let no soul know you have these letters in your possession, and they are to be desperately defended in case of discovery. Such are my instructions. You must start by to-morrow noon, deliver the letters as soon as may be, see Doctor Warren, make such arrangements as you can, then do what you list and the times allow. In my opinion Boston is a slumbering volcano and liable to sudden eruption. Beware of broils, boy; I know your temper. Before attempting to see Doctor Warren you must find Mr. Adams; and it is likely you will have trouble since he has been proscribed along with John Hancock. Were I you I would go straight to Lawyer Dench. You know Dench?"

"Thaddeus Dench? That old skinflint? Ay, I used to know him. But why go to him?" I asked.

"Because, though I have no personal liking for the man, he is, or was, chairman of the committee of correspondence for his district, and better than any one I know can direct you to Mr. Adams. Moreover, he is a sharp lawyer and a good one to consult in time of trouble. I believe some of his relatives are royalists, but he is stanch."

"To me he has the foxy look of Voltaire," I said.

"Voltaire's value lays not in his looks," returned my father. "You may trust Dench; and he can advance you money, if necessary. And you had better take the roan as it were a pity to put your weight on the bay for the length of Massachusetts. You may sell her in Boston, if you stay; it will eke out your funds. Do not be disappointed if Doctor Warren postpones matters until midsummer or autumn. Your journey is warranted by the letters. And now, good-night."

The old gentleman always dismissed me very abruptly, as if he had much to think of, and he usually had, while I being an obedient son and my father's will in any matter unquestioned law, at once retired to my room, slightly dazed by the thought of Boston and the future expanded before me. I was but twenty-six, healthy, big in body and with a strength fitting its bigness. I had lived a life of bodily activity, without sorrow, or great joy either, for that matter. As for the rest, you who have started on this history may

already have discovered that I possessed a love of adventure and excitement, and I add that in college and out this love had gotten me into many a scrape, as it was destined to get me into many another — and, perhaps, out of them, as well.

And so, behold me on the afternoon of the following day on my way over the wall of hills lying east of Barrington, with saddle-bag well stuffed with necessities, and twenty pounds of gold in a money-belt around my waist. The letters to Mr. Adams I carried in my coat pocket and I could conceive of no man getting them from me; neither could I conceive of any man wishing to do me harm, save, perhaps, Judge Evers; but my memory went a trifle short in this last.

However, it did seem strange that my father's final words to me were about the judge. "While you are safe enough in your own bailiwick, Allen," he said, standing by me when I was already in the saddle, "while I was beyond it I would say nothing of being from Barrington or having had a hand in the Evers matter. Things are too unsettled to admit of brag, and, my boy, you are prone to run wild when your blood is up. Undoubtedly news of the assault has reached headquarters; so, were I you, I would sing small about Judge Evers."

I remember to have laughed at the warning, which really I did not need, not being quite a fool, and with another shake of the old gentleman's

hand, a wave to black Rod sowing early peas in the garden and another to his wife in the kitchen door, I galloped away. At the top of the hill that would soon hide the town I stopped and looked back. The Housatonic lay like a silver ribbon athwart the softening land; Mount Washington, with Everett beyond, looked solemn in its loneliness, and far away to the west lay Sleeping Indian, the colossal outline of the distant Catskills. Over all the sun shone sparkling on that clear April day. I turned my back on the old familiar scene, which never again looked as it did, and it is only lately that I have come to know that it was I and not the land that had changed. It has a different beauty now, yet in itself it is the same. So does individual experience and development alter individual conception. At that time I had yet to learn the alchemy of the two most powerful passions known to man — Love and Hate.

In round numbers it is one hundred and ten miles from Barrington to Boston, and, not being anxious to kill my horse, I calculated on making the journey in four days. And nothing of the slightest moment happened until the fourth day though as I drew nearer to Boston the more I heard of what was toward in that forlorn city stricken down, as she was, by the hellish embargo act of the English parliament. Every one was looking for Gage to strike, but none knew in what direction his blow would be sent.

I met many people at the different taverns at which I stopped, but I kept my own counsel and let others do most of the talking, bearing in mind that I was to trust no man with the fact that I was the bearer of correspondence betwixt such political giants as Doctor Franklin and Mr. Samuel Adams. The letters were well wrapped in oilskin and appeared harmless enough to look at, but I did not dream that I was carrying matter that would go far toward ruining me. And yet, perhaps, it had the opposite effect, for God knows the letters were cause of trouble enough, especially when it is known, as it will be, that Mr. Adams never saw either of them.

CHAPTER III

AT THE WHITE HORSE

IMIND me that it was the evening of Tuesday, the eighteenth day of April, 1775, when I drew near to Boston, being then at Menotomy¹ and about five good miles from the city. It was fine weather, very warm for the season, and I was astonished at the advance of all growing things which were so much more forward than among the hills of Berkshire. Here the woods were misty with young leaves, grain was well up and grass rich in its color and length.

I was now on familiar ground again, being close to my Alma Mater at Cambridge, from which I had graduated but two years before. I figured on stopping at the White Horse for the night, seeing my old friend, Simon Able, host of the same, and jogging into town early the following morning, steering straight for Lawyer Dench's that I might find Mr. Adams and get the letters off my hands. I might easily have gone on and perhaps have seen Dench that night, but I wished for daylight and a look at the works I had heard Gage had stretched across Boston Neck and which had done more to

¹ Now West Cambridge.

arouse the people than any other one of his pieces of fine impudence.

There was no hint of coming trouble around Menotomy. The road was quiet and there were but few abroad at that hour, for it was just past sunset. As I rode along I met an English officer on horseback, he going west, but as his majesty's uniform was no novelty to me, I having been familiar with it in my college days, I paid him no attention. The man went on, hardly glancing at me, and presently, on looking back, I saw him standing on a hill-top, his horse finely silhouetted against the glow from the western sky. It was as though he had stopped and was waiting for some one, as, indeed, he was, as I afterward knew.

So now, being within less than a mile of the White Horse, and thinking of Able and supper, I was mightily surprised to mark a young lad awkwardly climbing the fence by the roadside and making as if to speak to me. Where he had come from I had no idea for there had been no sign of any one on the broad field, and the moon, almost at its full, had just wheeled above the woods and gave plenty of light.

“What is it, younker?” I asked, bringing my horse to a halt.

“Will you please tell me, sir, how far it is to Boston?” His voice was like one fairly frightened or exhausted, and he looked to be no more than seventeen. Despite the cloak he wore, and

which was shabby, he showed the slightness of his figure.

"It is better than five miles, lad," I returned, looking down at him. "An you are tired I think your weight will not kill my horse if you care to throw a leg up behind me."

"Are you going to Boston, sir?" he asked, I thought a bit eagerly.

"Nay — not so far. Give me your hand, son, and I'll lift you."

But he shook his head, backing beyond my reach, then thanked me and said he was not very tired. And so I left him trudging along without even a stick to help him, and I figured that he was a runaway 'prentice bound for his home, and was a peg above the average of his kind in that he was well mannered and failed to murder the king's English.

In the course of fifteen minutes I came abreast of the White Horse and there I saw a British soldier lolling on a bench in the moonlight, his musket against the weather-boards of the house. As I halted he got up and took a good look at me, a stare I returned, and without saying a word reseated himself on the bench though it was growing over-chilly for a perch outside.

I considered his being there at such an hour, armed as he was, a little unusual, and unusual it was, too, that no hostler ran out to take my horse, nor did Able appear at the door though the light

showing through the bar window, and a dancing glow, told of a fire being on the hearth within. After a moment of waiting I took my horse to the stable with my own hands, being familiar with the outbuildings, and there, more to my surprise, was another soldier, with his coat off, grooming a horse that looked to have recently been driven hard. I then saw how evil had progressed, since the land hereabout seemed to be sprouting red-coats, while in my day one was rarely seen so far afield.

I said nothing to the man, but carefully attended to my own tired animal, blanketing him and feeding him well, then made tracks for the tavern and entered the bar, hoping to be met by the jolly Able.

But there was no Able there and at first sight I thought the room was empty, but a second or two later discovered a man on the settle. He was stretched out at full length and fast asleep. I could not see his face, his back being toward me, but I took him to be a tipsy farmer whose house might be uncomfortable until he had slept off the fumes of his liquor, and that he was past middle life was plain in the mass of unqueued white hair that was tumbled around his hatless head.

Believing it best to let sleeping dogs lie, I did not disturb him to inquire after Able, nor did I put my head from the window and ask of the soldier seated under it, because, as I have said, I hated the breed of red-coats, one and all. So I

dropped into a chair and waited for Simon, beguiling the time with a pipe of tobacco and counting the pewters over the bar, my mind being well-nigh vacuous at the moment. God knows it was the last of vacuity my brain indulged in for many moons. In the meantime my companion on the settle made no move nor sound to show he was alive.

But presently I heard the soldier under the window get quickly to his feet; then there was a call, and in a few moments I caught the bleat of a boyish voice, the rattle of shoes in the entry, and there entered the soldier, who I now saw was a sergeant, and the lad I had left behind on the road. He was pale enough in the light of the candles, and his big, dark eyes held a frightened look. The soldier had gripped him by one arm.

“To Boston, is it!” he was saying, in a rough voice. “Ay, I think it is; but here you’ll stay until I turn you over to one that’s coming.”

I became interested.

“You have no right to stop me,” said the boy, feebly attempting to free his arm from the sergeant’s hold.

“Have I not? Little ye know the rules, son! Ye’ll not escape me this time! Your coming is a flight o’ luck!”

“I know not what you mean,” said the youth, and I thought he was about to cry instead of blasting the sergeant between the eyes, as he should

have done; but he was a milksop — more a girl than a boy, as I now saw by his face, and I knew he had not the spirit.

“ ‘Tis a thing you’ll soon find out,” said the man. “ Ye thought to trick us, did ye? Sit ye down at the table, sir.” This with an exaggerated bow to his captive. “ No harm will come to you if ye behave yerself, my fine young man!” With that the soldier placed his musket against the wall and seated himself in a chair placed opposite to that into which he had thrust the lad.

Now, I could have sworn the boy was no criminal, civil or military, and so could not understand what right, save that of might, the sergeant had to arrest him on the open road; and feeling as I did toward any one wearing the uniform of the king all my sympathies went out to the young fellow, as much for his very helplessness as for aught else. The sergeant may have subdued him, but the sight of the scarlet of his coat had the contrary effect on me.

“ What is the matter between you two?” I asked, rising and standing with my back to the small fire.

“ I know not,” said the youth, with an appeal in his voice as he threw back his camlet cloak and half held out his arms as if he looked for me to rescue him, much as a girl might have done. “ This man stopped me on the road as I was passing, and said I was bound to the king’s forces.”

"And are you not?" I asked, flashing a glance at the now grinning soldier who was taking a leather-bound book from his pocket.

"Nay, I am not."

"Ay," put in the sergeant, "but he is. I've been lookin' for him an' have my orders about him. He thought to sneak by in the dark, an'—"

"'Tis a lie!" interrupted the other. "I am no sneak! I never saw this man before in my life!"

"What in the devil's name is the meaning of this?" I put in, perplexed, but scenting a great wrong somewhere. And, being young and it my nature, I determined to right the wrong, if possible.

"See here, my young buck," said the sergeant, suddenly sobering, as he slammed his book to the table and turned on me, "ye'd best not interfere in matters that concern only yer betters. If ye know what's good for ye ye'll breathe slow an' talk low." This last with a scowl at me.

Now, had it not been for the sergeant's covert threat I probably would not have acted as I did; but not being of a breed that tamely bears dictation, I resented both the man's half-insulting manner and his tone, and took the step that makes my story worth the telling; ay, the step that led me at once into a life different from that planned; one of which I had so far only dreamed, as young men dream, of great adventure, and glory, and of love, perchance.

Therefore, instead of being abashed by the man my ire was aroused, and advancing to the table, I struck it sharply with my knuckles. "I'll hear the truth of this before I decide," I returned firmly. "Think not to frighten me because you wear the king's livery!"

"A fine, clodhoppin' interloper ye be!" exclaimed the sergeant, flushing with anger, yet plainly uncomfortable. "An' were it not for yer bigness I'd manhandle ye, as I may yet do. Did ye not hear me say that this party belonged to the king?"

"Did you sign your name?" I asked quietly, turning to the youth.

"No, sir. He asked my name and I told him one — but — but it was not my real name."

"Not your own?"

"No, sir, not really my own; but he said he would hold me until a certain person, I know not who, had seen me."

"That will do," I returned, disgusted at the youth's callowness and ignorance. "By your own showing, you have not been many days born — or have been living in the woods, which last does not fit your appearance. Did this man tell you aught of the army you were to join?"

"Not a word, sir. He —"

"He lies," interrupted the sergeant.

"Does he so?" said I. "I might think it, did I not know the ways of your ilk and the necessities

of Gage. Your method savors of the press-gang. The boy did not sign his name. Dost think to make him fight against his own countrymen? That is what you want him for."

"What is it to ye what I want him for? I am obeying orders. 'Twill be but a little an' I'll have ye, too, ye —"

"Peace, friend," I interrupted. "Your words are big. An' that you are so anxious to have me in your clutches pencil another name in your book. I will show you an argument. Put down John Smith."

Now, whether the man, being blinded by anger and so a fool for the time, really thought to have a better hold on me by getting me committed even to a slight extent, I know not; but instead of leaping on me, as I at first thought he would, he only pulled out his book and wrote rapidly.

"Now make yer mark here," he said, pointing at the name.

And myself being blinded by my suddenly conceived plan of helping the youth, besides being reckless to a degree, bent over and put a cross to the name, though I had sense enough to realize I was treading on ticklish ground, though God knows that such knowledge has never stood in my way nor made me abate a determination.

At the completion of my mark, the sergeant pulled out a silver shilling and tossed it to me.

"There, my buck, I have ye!" he exclaimed,

as I picked up the silver. "I have yer name, an' ye handled the king's shilling. It runs with my commission that —"

"Damn the king's shilling and your commission — and you, too, for the matter of that!" I exclaimed, hurling the coin across the room. "Get John Smith if you want him. I am not he. Nor have you asked me to join the army. May not a man make a cross-mark without finding himself a prisoner?"

"Now then, my lad," I said, turning to the trembling boy, "we have reason on our side, if we have nothing else. As for force — he beats you, if not myself, and therefore I advise you to cut and run for it, and I'll see that this lobster-back does not follow far."

At that I pointed to the door. The soldier made as if to jump to his feet; but I reached for him and, grasping him by the collar, forced him back into his chair and there held him with one hand, while with the other I snatched up the leather-covered book and flung it into the fire. But for a moment the youth was too frightened to obey, and hung in the wind with his great eyes staring into mine.

"Go!" I shouted, and as if my voice lifted him, he jumped to his feet and ran from the room with the lightness of a deer, banging the door behind him.

And then I knew I had my hands full; for,

though I might make a shift to defend myself against any unarmed man, I could not hold the stocky sergeant into his chair for an indefinite time, and his musket stood handy to his grasp, and I had small doubt it was loaded.

CHAPTER IV.

JACOB MOON

EVEN now I have the memory of the red blood as it leaped to the soldier's thick neck and his face on the realization that he had been outdone. With a round oath he whirled out of my grasp, while I sprang away, placing myself betwixt him and his weapon, and being intrenched by the table.

There I braced myself for assault, well assured that when he grappled with me I would have him at a disadvantage, for few men between Essex and Berkshire might best me in boxing or the wrestle.

I never saw rage so akin to insanity as in the sergeant as he caught sight of his book already curling in the heat of the bed of coals into which it had fallen. With something like a scream he leaped for it and dragged it forth, stamping out the fire that crimped the edges of the paper. Then he gave me his attention, though instead of at once assaulting me, he seized the chair in which he had been sitting and hurled it at my head, the piece of furniture passing over me and out through the open window at my back. This he was about to follow up in person, and there was plain murder in his eye as he crouched by the end of the fireplace.

Now I had given no more attention to the farmer on the settle than I had to the smoldering back-log; indeed, I had not considered his presence, one way or another; but as the soldier sprang to pass him in his dash for me, with the quickness of a cat the recumbent man interposed himself between us.

I could only see his broad back as he faced the infuriated soldier; but I marked the squareness of his almost squat body and the weight of his unqueued hair as it streamed in disorder over his shoulders. He wasted no time in parley, but drawing back his right arm, shot out his fist.

The blow took the redcoat on the point of his chin, and if it did not at once stun, it completely demoralized him, for he whirled around on his heel, and clutching at the table, fell, carrying it over with him, and with a crash both went to the floor, the man lying still.

As a sequel to this rumpus I looked to see the door burst open and the landlord, or some one else, rush in; but nothing of the kind happened. Instead, the farmer turned to me and held out his hand.

And then I wondered that I had taken him for a farmer, since if he were not a sailor I had no right attempting to fix a calling for him. His broad, clean-shaven face was benign, his gray eye clear, his set jaw strong, and though he must have been well past fifty years, his teeth were even and

sound. It was the deep tan on his face and his hooked fingers, together with his dress, that gave him the sea flavor.

“ And now, lad,” he said easily, and with a slow smile that bespoke a sense of self-reliance, “ it is full time for ye to get into a safe harbor, seein’ that henceforth ye will be a marked man. What might be your name? ”

“ Allen Darcy, of Barrington,” I replied, at once attracted to him and forgetting the policy of not mentioning my home town, even then feeling that I could trust him with anything, so completely and so instantly had he subjugated me.

“ Oh-ho! ” he exclaimed, throwing up both his great hands. “ Of Barrington, ha! An’ by all that’s dead I’ll lay a wager that a lad o’ your size an’ grit is akin to Judge Darcy, o’ Berkshire.”

“ He is my father,” said I.

“ Ah-ha! Then I know ye. Ye were of those who pulled his honor from the bench, scarce a month agone! ”

“ Ay,” I returned, astonished that the news had gone so far abroad and so soon.

“ An’ so I struck better than I knew! I was in your father’s house scarce a week since, being a messenger bearing letters.”

“ For Samuel Adams? ” I asked.

“ That same,” he returned, lowering his voice. “ An’ had I known what was toward I might have carried the matter myself without troubling Judge

Darcy. But I did not then think to come this way."

"Which is no matter, I being the bearer of them," I replied, foolishly confiding the fact, though this foolishness bore no evil consequences.

"I think likely," he returned. "An' so, all the more ye should not be caught! Those letters would be found on ye, an' the British authorities would doubtless give much to come by their contents, I take it, though I know nothing of their wording. I love the spirit ye show, lad, but this is no place for ye. Get hence an' after the youngster ye saved."

"I'm obliged to you," I returned; "but it seems that your own case is more desperate than mine, since it was you who struck the soldier. Do not think I fear him. What shall I call you, friend?"

"Moon, Jacob Moon. An' my offense is not as rank as yours, for all the seeming, since you have defied the British authorities, while I have but struck down an individual who would break the peace.

"Look you, son; I am not altogether what I seem, an' I know this fellow was expecting the arrival of others of his ilk. That is why I warn ye. And surely you know the flavor of the times an' what is toward this night."

"I know that there has been trouble, and that more is at hand."

"And close at hand," returned the old man.

"Scarce an hour agone a rider went in haste to Lexington, taking with him a word o' warning; an' I am on the watch for his return. I tell ye, son, that this place will be full o' red-coats ere morning, an' I would not have ye caught here."

"You are very kind," I said, "but how about yourself? This fellow will soon recover and denounce you."

"Fret not for me, my son," he replied. "I struck with a warrant an' an eye to my own safety. But mayhap the rascal would be better in the cellar than a witness here."

And so saying Moon bent and took the unconscious man by the collar, and without further words dragged him from the room, while I straightened the overturned furniture. For I had no mind to run, both because I had no fear of the sergeant and did not feel like leaving the old man to bear the brunt of coming difficulty. Nor do I happen to be of the kidney of those who flee from danger while duty places me in it. I had the name of — but let that rest, as an explanation might sound boastful; only, just then I felt that my line of duty lay where I was. Trouble? Unfortunately I do not always stop to weigh it.

So I stayed where I was instead of running after an inconsequential boy, and had barely straightened the table and chairs, when the outer door opened and admitted, not Able, for whom I looked, but a soldier — a British soldier, but it

was not the sergeant, being only the man I had seen in the stable. With an air of surprise he stood a moment looking about the room, then he addressed me.

“How long have ye been here, fellow?”

“What’s that to you?” I returned, nettled at his voice and manner, as well as at the color of his coat.

“It matters much,” he said, drawing in his horns. “Has there been a sergeant here? Did you see him?”

“Ay, I saw him.”

“Where is he?” The man advanced a step toward me.

“Gone out,” I answered, enjoying his evident discomfort.

“Where, you lout?” he demanded with a scowl, as he recognized my attitude toward him — or perhaps it was because I, a civilian, dared cross words with one of the military.

“As to that, I am no more his keeper than I am a servant to answer the questions of a shrimp-backed hireling,” I returned warmly, foolishly giving scope to my spleen.

I know not how this petty quarrel might have ended, but as each of us took something of a belligerent attitude again the door opened, and again there entered one of his majesty’s soldiers. But this time it was an officer. That something was in the wind was very evident.

“What’s this? What’s this?” demanded the newcomer, as his eye caught the situation. The soldier drew himself to “attention” and saluted.

“O’Hara has deserted his post, sir, and yon yokel insulted me when I inquired about him. I was about to chastise him, sir, when —”

“He was about to try,” I put in, “and I would not have your presence interfere if he is still of the same mind. I am ready to give him a lesson in civility to citizens, and one he will not readily forget.”

I was working myself into a red heat as I spoke.

The officer’s face grew darkly flushed at my words, and in some way he looked familiar, but I could not place him, though I thought I might have met him in or about Boston during my college days. Instead of replying to me he turned to the soldier.

“You may stable my horse. I shall remain here until — No matter; stable the animal and remain outside until I call.”

Without answering the soldier again saluted, and with a malignant look at me left the room. The officer, with an indolent ease, plainly affected, walked to the settle and seated himself on it.

I remained standing as I looked at him, puzzled by his face which I thought I had seen before. However, I could not place him.

CHAPTER V.

DEVIL DARCY

FOR a few moments silence reigned between us, not a sound being heard save the loud tick of the Dutch clock on the wall, and the occasional snap of the dying fire.

It appeared that the officer was for ignoring my presence, for he abstractedly tapped his booted leg with his sword-scabbard as he gazed into the failing flame, while I stood looking at him and wondered what had become of old Moon, what disposition he had made of the unconscious sergeant, and began to think that the old man was wiser than I, and that I had better take horse and get elsewhere. It would have altered my life had I acted to that end, but I did not.

Presently the officer's eye caught sight of the sergeant's book where it lay on the broad hearth, its edges yet smoking. With sudden interest the man leaned forward, and with his scabbard pulled it toward him, shook out the few remaining sparks, and opened it.

Then he started and looked up at me.

"How came this book here?" he demanded.

I made no answer. Consulting the book again, he said:

“ Say, fellow, are you John Smith ? ”

“ I am neither a fellow nor John Smith , ” I returned, seating myself on the end of the table.

“ Dost know how the book came to the fire ? ”

“ Ay, I do. But there be others who know as much. You may question them.”

“ Now, by the hot foot of Lucifer, I’ll see you trimmed into respect for your betters ! ” he burst out, rising, and whipping out his sword in anger. I slipped from the table and placed it between us, my eyes suddenly opened to his temper.

“ Be a little careful with the knife, sir, ” I returned. “ I would not have you do your trimming with that.”

“ Who are you ? and where do you belong, you insolent rebel, for a rebel you undoubtedly are ? ” he asked, sinking back on the settle as he saw I was fairly well intrenched.

“ I am from Berkshire, ” I answered, not caring to be more explicit.

“ A nest of treason, second only to Boston ! ” he exclaimed. “ Answer me and save your skin. Was a sergeant in here ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ Any one else ? ”

I thought of Moon and of the young fellow who had escaped, but I am no informer.

“ You will have to find the sergeant and question him, ” I returned carelessly.

“ By the hot foot of Lucifer ! ” he began again,

but checked himself as he turned over the burnt leaves of the book still in his hands.

And then I knew the man. The odd and half-familiar expletive had stirred me when I first heard it, and his second use of it rolled back the curtain that clouded my memory. Ay, I knew him then, and I wondered that I had not known him before, despite his uniform, for his face was unchanged.

He was Lawrence Brussel, in the old days nicknamed Hotfoot Brussel. He had been a college-mate, and my ancient dislike for him leaped to the surface as I became sure of his identity.

He had called himself a full-blooded Englishman, though I knew him to be colonial born, and as a youth he had lived with an uncle in Boston. We had entered Harvard in the same year, but Brussel had been a failure from the first, even as a freshman.

He had been arrogant, and unpopular through his excessive stinginess, while he held himself aloof from his classmates and openly derided us of the colonies as being beneath him. As for his relations with women let me say as little as possible, only he was a conceited ass withal. His abilities as a student had been well-nigh *nil*, he having been forever behind the rest of us. In his second year he had thrown up his college rights to prevent the disgrace of rustication, and I had heard he had gone to England, where he had purchased a commission in the army.

Undoubtedly he had come back by way of Halifax, and was now under Gage, and again treading the land of his birth, but as an enemy to his countrymen.

Though never openly at war, there had always been bad blood between us, quite as much because I excelled him in studies as that I always resented his patronizing airs, ridiculed his references to the aristocracy from which he claimed descent, and openly cursed him for his lack of principle and ambition.

I knew the man for a consummate liar — a liar from both habit and cowardice — and, save physically, had not the least respect for him. As for that, he was about my height and build, though somewhat heavier, bore a rather handsome face, and was my senior by two years.

It was fate that brought us together that night, but I did not then suspect it. All I knew was that here was Hotfoot, otherwise Larry Brussel, and he had not recognized me. Nor did I care to have him. When he met the sergeant, as he was bound to sooner or later do, there would be a means of identification which might become more than annoying to me in the future.

As he sat there looking at me, his eyes narrowing as if he were puzzled, my old dislike for him grew apace. Had he appeared as a civilian, it would have been bad enough; but to see this mass of ignorance, prejudice, and pride, tricked out in

his majesty's uniform, and hear him threaten me, was almost more than I could bear.

"I shall not chastise you as you deserve," he finally said. "There be others who will take that from my hands."

"You have Falstaff's wisdom in recognizing discretion as the better part of valor," I said mockingly, coming from behind the table and reseating myself on it, carelessly swinging one leg. He did not rise to the taunt, having suddenly fallen into thought, and again silence settled between us. Presently Brussel looked up and spoke, and now his voice had the wheedling softness I well remembered he used in the days when he tried to borrow money or curry favor with his fellows. "You say you have traveled from the west?" he asked, as if there had been nothing but smoothness betwixt us.

"Ay, and but just off the road," I returned, also peaceably.

"Alone?" The question was carelessly put.

"Alone," I answered.

"By way of Concord and Lexington?"

"Ay," I replied, thinking he was mighty curious.

"And did you see aught of a damsel?"

"Ay, many a damsel," I said, knowing his weakness, and wondering what he was getting at.

"I mean not those of the towns, sir. I mean, didst see a woman traveling — riding a worn

horse — a bay — and without attendance — a — a damsel, in short? Have you seen such?"

Here was Hotfoot, the ladykiller, all over again. I thought I saw his drift and it made me mad.

"No," I said sharply. "Nor would I look to see a damsel being long without so-called protection while Gage has his spawn scattered over the land."

He looked hard at me at that. "An you had," he said warmly, and with a sneer, "you would undoubtedly have offered yourself that no harm save that of your own making might come to her."

The insult was personal and gratuitous. The blood leaped to my head, and ere I was aware I had uncovered that which I had meant to conceal.

"Still at your old ways! Have a care — have a care, Hotfoot," I said. "You be out of bounds, and college laws will not save you as they have done many times in the past."

He swung round as if I had struck him, and stared at me in open wonder.

"What the deuce!" he exclaimed.

"You are getting warm at guessing, Larry," I said. "If your wits were as alert as your tongue you would have been in no hurry to tell of ambushing a damsel without protection, an affair of no honor, if you are concerned in it, and to insult an old classmate, who happens to know you too well."

He looked at me stupidly for an instant, and

then burst out: "By the hot foot of Lucifer! You are Devil Darcy!"

"I am Allen Darcy," I said, parrying the nickname acquired in the desperate fool-hardiness of youth. "But you will please not to 'Devil' me, else you raise the devil in me. And how dost enjoy being a renegade in these times?"

"By Lucifer, my lad!" he said, rising in heat. "I might have known you by your gross impudence! Look to yourself, Allen Darcy, and do not think I will allow the king's uniform to be insulted by a low-born clodhopper."

"And think not that your scarlet coat gives you license. Nay, Hotfoot, your play of dignity is lost on me; I know you inside and out."

I confess that I enjoyed baiting him as he stood there; beside him, for interest, the sergeant fell into insignificance. For a moment my old college-mate stood glowering at me, seemingly taking my measure, his countenance growing black. Finally he appeared to come to some decision, and drawing himself up with an air of superiority, he said, and quickly, too:

"Allen Darcy, I no longer know you as a class-mate. You wish to provoke me into a broil, but as a British officer I may not at present soil my hand or sword in a personal quarrel and with such as you, though it comes to me as a duty to see you arrested." With that he stepped toward the door.

Now, it was plain to me that he meant to summon the soldier from the barn and have me put under restraint; and whether right or wrong to me it was hardly a problem what the result of such an attempt would be. To be sure, there was the sergeant's musket against the wall. I might take it and defend myself thereby perhaps killing one or both of the men. The idea showed its impossibility though had I lifted the piece and shot Hotfoot through the head I think I would have suffered less than I did, in the long run.

And as killing was out of the question then so was my arrest, and Brussel had not taken two steps toward the door ere I made up my mind to thwart him. Before he had gotten more than half way across the spacious room I had interposed myself betwixt him and the entrance.

"What do you mean to do, Hotfoot?" I asked, backing against the panels, and smiling at him.

"Do?" he suddenly thundered, stopping and drawing his sword again, a weapon I am not the least afraid of when on guard. "Do? I am going to arrest you for interfering with the king's justice."

So it was as I had feared, though just what he meant by "the king's justice" I did not know. Had he, too, wind of my exploit in Barrington? Or did he consider that my attitude toward himself warranted the charge? It was a rather ticklish situation for me.

"Hotfoot," said I, pointing at him, "have you aught but mud in your composition? We have never been friends, nor even pretended friendship, yet have crossed nothing worse than our tongues. Now has come the time that between us it must be seen which is the better man.

"I know not the woman you intended to insult; but you did insult me, a matter I resented. Now you would sneak out and get help to punish me! Dost think I am blind, Larry? Nay, man. Put off that sword and meet me foot to foot, and should I fail to throw you through yonder window in the space of three minutes I will yield myself to you. Is it fair? If not, set your terms, for from this room you shall not go until I am ready to let you."

Brussel had halted and now looked at me, his face paling and reddening alternately. "You — you will attempt to prevent my leaving this room?" he gasped.

"No less," I returned, stiffening my jaw.

"Now, by the hot foot of Lucifer!" And with no more than that he suddenly whirled his sword from its scabbard and made as if to cut me down. But little does one need care for sword or bayonet if on the watch and alert, for they are weapons easily made harmless; but they make fine threats, and his was enough for me, my blood being up, and in truth I was only too glad to close with him. Ere his steel could descend I had my

arms around him, and, the sword then being useless, he dropped it and grappled with me, probably hoping that with his greater weight he could master me.

Now there are two things I could do well, though I say it in all modesty, one being to wrestle in any fashion, the other to use my fists in the art they call "boxing," and of the two I was the more skilful in the former.

So when Brussel cast aside his steel and made to throw me in a hand-to-hand encounter, the devil, after whom I had been nicknamed for my short temper and a spirit of daring, rose in me like a wave, and I felt that I was about to teach my old classmate a lesson in humility. To that end I made shift to give him what is known as the "under-hold," or advantage, though it is an advantage only to those who know how to use it. And he did not.

I felt his body turn rigid as he strained to throw me, he catching his breath in short gasps as together we staggered over the floor, upsetting chairs and tables, while I bided my time and felt slowly for the grip I aimed at.

Two minutes must have passed in this voiceless struggle, yet not a soul entered to interrupt us, nor did Brussel lift his voice above a grunt as his pent breath left his body. But in the third minute, when I finally got where I could reach over his back and gathered a bunch of his scarlet coat in

my grasp, he evidently knew what was coming, for the coward in him leaped out in a great yell for help.

But by then I was ready, and, suddenly straightening myself, in one supreme effort I carried him clean from the floor, flinging him over my shoulder in a swing that brought his boot-heels against the ceiling with a bang; then, loosening my hold, tore away from him.

He came to the floor with a crash, and before he could gather his scattered wits I lifted him as one might lift a sack of grain, and was about to shoot him through the open window when I heard the shout of some one in the passage and the noise of running feet. It was too late for me to execute my threat in full, and, conceiving I would have scant justice from any redcoat who might now catch me, I dropped the officer and vaulted through the window. This latter was no great feat, the sill being not above the level of a man's head from outside.

And I was but just in time, for as I looked back into the room I saw the soldier who had come in after the sergeant, and the sergeant himself, dash through the door and into the disordered apartment.

The sergeant was in a towering rage; his face was aflame, his coat torn and covered with cobwebs, and, as I ducked below the sill that I might not be seen, I heard him say:

" Whate'r his name he's naught but a black
desarter now, an' I'll have him or his life! He
can't have gone far! What! There's been hell
to pay here! By the Lord, there's Captain Brus-
sel!"

That was enough for me. With two men rag-
ing against me, and a third who would obey the
orders of either, it behooved me to get out of that
vicinity, even without horse and baggage; these I
might get later from Able. For now I was indeed
a marked man, and it did not take much thought
to see what a mess I had allowed my loss of temper
to make for me. My duty was plain. I must
lose myself, and where better than in Boston?
And I must deliver my letters to Mr. Adams at
once, and then get to a more friendly territory.
Certainly eastern Massachusetts was no place for
me; for the ground seemed to breed British sol-
diers, and the hue of his majesty's hated uniform
colored all things.

So, with a quiet step that was very like sneaking,
I stole away from the window, and not until I was
well among the shadows did I lose the fear that
a musket-ball would follow me. I little dreamed
how soon musket-balls would be whistling through
that very air, or that the first blood of the Revolu-
tion was to be shed in less than seven hours.
For it was about midnight when I came out upon
the main road and footed it quickly toward Bos-
ton. As I have said, it was a fine moonlit night

after a warm day, but now there was a chill in the air that made motion agreeable. I was in fine fettle as I strode briskly along the lonely and dusty road, and the only thing that then puzzled me was what had become of Moon? I had looked to see him return to the coffee-room, and wondered if he could have met with mishap, feeling as if I were deserting a friend in trouble.

But I need not have worried.

I did not then know the resourcefulness of the old man, but I learned something of it later; nor did I know that my actions had been marked by him and had won a passport to his friendship.

CHAPTER VI

A REVELATION

IHAD not trudged far along the deserted highway when it occurred to me that it would be the height of folly to attempt to enter Boston by way of the "Neck," which I had heard was fortified.

It is true that at that time Gage had not quite dared to interfere with the coming and going of citizens from the city, but I was shrewd enough to guess that an excuse would be made to hold me if I attempted to pass at that hour. I considered it wiser to enter Boston from another direction — that is, I would go to Charlestown that night, and cross the Charles by the penny ferry in the early morning.

I walked due east, humming a tune and nursing a feeling of warm satisfaction at having bested my old collegemate, and had gone less than a mile on my way, and there was no sound of pursuit behind me, when ahead, by the side of the white and moonlit road, I saw a man sitting on a boulder. Having nothing to fear from any one in front, I continued on, mighty curious until, coming opposite the figure, I stopped short. For there, wan-faced, sat the youth I had rescued, his

cloak drawn tightly about him, looking at me with frightened eyes.

“Why, hello, youngster!” I exclaimed in astonishment, for I had not thought of ever seeing him again.

“Oh! Is it you?” he returned, and in both looks and voice he showed relief.

“I fancy I am not to be mistaken for many,” I answered, good naturedly; “I thought you were farther along on your journey. Whither bound, my lad?”

“To Boston,” he returned, a note of weariness in his voice, “but I am very tired, having walked a long way.”

“Ay? And from where do you hail?”

“From the Hampshire Grants, sir.”

“And a good walk indeed for a youngster of your stripe! Well, we beat yon lobster-back, did we not?”

“I can hardly say that we did,” he answered, emphasizing the “we.” “But I am very glad you have overtaken me, sir, for I have yet to thank you for your kindness and bravery.” With that, and without offering to rise, he made room for me on the great boulder, and I, willing to rest a moment, dropped beside him, and pulling out my pipe, filled and lighted it, my ears always open for a sound on the road from the west.

“So you are bound for Boston, are you, younker?” I said. “Well, you be off the way un-

less you mean to go in at the back door. A fine muss I am in, and on your account, though I am not finding fault with you."

And then I gave him a hurried sketch of what I had been through and how I had been obliged to run away without my horse.

"I am very sorry," he said simply. And he looked sorry.

Now he was only a boy, and a weak-spirited one at that; but to me tears carry no respect with them, and to see this stripling looking as if ready to weep over an adventure that had but stirred my blood put me out of patience.

"My lad," said I, "it comes to me that no mortal is more out of place than are you. Tell me what brings you here. You are no more than a baby, and not fit to leave home."

With that he drew himself up with an air of being offended, as weak folks are apt to do, but he made no retort. Presently, thinking that I had taken so much interest in him that I might as well know more, I began to question him gently and soon got his story. It was short, and tame enough. He was seventeen, he said, and had never been away from home before. His father had but just died, and he had been left alone in the world. But there was a lawyer in Boston who had known his father well and who had his affairs in charge, and this stripling was on his way to see the man of law, and expected to get his

father's estate, or at least money enough to keep body and soul together.

For lack of present funds he had slowly and painfully traveled afoot for two days, and was well tired out.

"And who is the man you hope to see?" I asked, not really caring.

"One Squire Dench," he said.

I almost leaped to my feet at the name.

"Squire Dench?" I cried.

"And why not?" he asked. "It is to his house I am traveling."

"He is a sound man and a patriot," I returned.

"One of the committee of correspondence."

"Then why did you start at the name?" asked the youth.

"Well, my lad," I answered, "because this same Squire Dench happens to be the uncle of the impudent officer whom I came close to throwing from the window from which I was compelled to leap myself. 'Tis a strange coincidence, but can mean nothing."

"And you know him? What manner of man is Squire Dench?" asked the boy. "I confess I have no knowledge of him, and, as my father's death was sudden, he could not advise me."

"Well," said I, "Dench is a close-fisted miser when it comes to matters of money. He is old enough to be my father, and is a man of sterling sense in most things. I have heard whispers

about him, but who is not whispered about? However, things be at a fine pass when matters fall in this fashion. For I, myself, am bound for Dench's house, albeit I have no love for him or his ilk. And so, he has your money! My lad, yours is an errand for a man, and not for the like of you, for the lawyer is a hard one from whom to twist a shilling."

"Where does he live?" came from the youth.

"On Milk Street — or he used to. And now if you will pick up your legs we will get on."

I rose to my feet, knocking the ashes from my pipe.

But the boy did not stir.

"I do not know your name, sir," he said.

"'Tis Darcy, of Barrington," I replied.
"What's yours, younker?"

"Mine is Selden — Louis Selden. And now, Mr. Darcy, I cannot go with you until I have told you more. Indeed, I must trust some one, and I know of none more worthy than the man who saved me. You are a brave spirit, and, like a brave spirit, an honorable one. Indeed, I must tell you."

"What now?" said I, struck by the boy's elegance of language, and wondering what was coming.

"It is this —" he said, drawing his cloak tight about his slight figure.

But he got no further, for as the last word

left his mouth there came to my ear a sound that made me lift my hand to silence him. I had heard it faintly before; but now it was louder and growing, being the sound of metal against metal and borne clearly on the windless air, and with it there was the tramp of many feet falling in unison. It did not come from the west, from which direction I was half expecting trouble, but as the youth stopped short and I listened, there drifted down from eastward the clear, ringing neigh of a horse, and almost the next instant, on the moonlit road where it curves south toward Charlestown, I saw a body of men swing into sight, and the moonlight glinted from a line of polished steel.

Now, save through intuition, I had no knowledge of what was in the wind; but that sixth sense was alert, and the few words Moon had dropped helped me to fathom the mystery of a body of armed men on the road at midnight, and the presence of the officer and soldiers at the White Horse was accounted for.

Brussel had been sent forward for a purpose, and to me the whole matter was as clear as it became later. Gage had decided to make his threatened move, his object undoubtedly being a raid on Concord, where I and all men knew that many stores had been gathered by the committee of safety against the breaking of the brewing political storm. Young though I was, I was no fool, and the tremendous nature of the move and its

possible consequences stirred me, and for the moment made me forget all else.

But I did not stand wool-gathering for many seconds, for the road was bright as need be, and I knew what it would mean to be picked up by that silent column. We had been seated nearly under a tree, Selden and I, and probably the dark background saved us from immediate observation; but as the realization of our danger came to me I turned to him and spoke in a hurried whisper: "Lad, you will have to elect to go with me or be arrested by those coming yonder. If with me, you must hurry; but if not, do not tell them you had a companion."

"What is it?" he asked, clasping his hands like a woman and turning pale, though he had color enough the moment before.

"What is it! Good God! Are you just from your mother's breast? Gage's regulars are on a mission into the country! Yonder they come! And there is going to be hell to pay!"

With that I left him, there being no time to lose, and bending low, ran alongside of the stone wall fencing the road until I came to a pair of bars. Squeezing between them I threw myself on the dew-laden grass, placing my head where I could command a view of the highway. I hardly looked for the boy to follow me, and, indeed, so excited had I suddenly become that for the moment I thought nothing about him. But he

was hard behind me, it appeared, slipping his lithe figure betwixt the bars, but instead of lying by my side he went some distance away and hid even from my eye.

It had been a narrow escape for us — or I thought it narrow, but, God wot, it had perhaps been better for us both had the vanguard of the little army captured us there and then, though in that event I probably would have had no story to tell.

On came the advancing column, a cloud of dust marking its wake, for the weather was dry, a body of men four abreast, and at their head rode an officer on a bay horse.

There was something mighty sinister in that silent host, for I heard not a word as they passed. There were about eight hundred, I guessed, each man in light marching order, and the color of their coats lay like a splash of blood on the highway. Not a scout was out, not a skirmisher in advance, not a flanker beat the fields on either side of the road. It was like a force depending for its safety more on secrecy of movement than on military tactics. Undoubtedly it was meant for surprise.

For some minutes after the rear of the column had passed I remained still, fearing to be seen by a possible straggler, then I rose to my feet and looked at the distant column now fogged by the dust they had raised. At that instant I heard a church-bell far away, the sound coming down the

still night air with strange effect; it was at once followed by another, fainter in the distance and being rung violently. Then came the far-off barking of a dog, and, as I listened, my nerves quivering, I heard the muffled report of a distant gun — an alarm gun.

“Thank God, the quarry is awake and afoot!” I exclaimed, half-aloud. “And I wonder if Adams or Hancock, or perchance Warren, knows of this!” And then I decided to get to Doctor Warren as quickly as possible, not knowing that his eyes were never closed to the very thing that was then happening. As I stood there thinking how to act, Selden appeared from somewhere, and he was shaking from either fright or a chill. I had mighty little respect for this weakling, but I could not abandon him there.

“Why were you so frightened?” he asked, though his own fear stood out on him as plainly as the nose on his face. I did not trouble myself to answer the question, being more than anxious to get on.

“I am going straight to Boston this night, and by way of the Neck,” I said. “I must see Dench, he being of the committee, and let him transmit the news of this night’s work. If you care to go with me I will guide you to the lawyer’s house. Younker, those men mean war, a game you have little to do with; but I cannot dawdle over it. You must move fast if with me.”

At that he lifted his face toward me with a quick turn that should have told me more than it did, looking squarely at me as we stood in the open meadow.

“Mr. Darcy,” he said, “I will go with you, and as fast as I can; but I am not what I seem, and it is your due to know it. I am a girl and not a boy — and my name is Louise Selden.”

Had she struck me I could not have been more surprised, which shows I am sometimes stupid; and I stood staring at her, at which she gave a low, scared laugh.

“I little wonder that you are astonished,” she went on hurriedly, “and I did not look to deceive you for so long. Think not that I have unsexed myself without good reason or for aught but necessity. I travel thus for self-protection. Place me before Lawyer Dench’s house and I will ask no more, and be deeply in your debt.”

“Well, by Heaven, Mistress Selden!” I exclaimed as I realized what a blind fool I had been, for now her sex stood out in voice and manner plainly enough. “You have hit me hard, and mayhap I have been over-rough with you; but I see you are in trouble, and I will not desert you. However, it bothers me to know why you appealed to me in the tavern when you had but to discover yourself to the sergeant, and he would have been powerless to —”

“And would I have fared better than I have?”

she interrupted, her face turning scarlet in the moonlight.

“I know not,” I said.

“Nay, but I do; for he knew I was no boy, though he made as if he took me for one.”

“He knew!” I exclaimed, rather than asked.

“Ay, since it is now plain that he was on the watch for me. I had just passed — but never mind — I now know he was looking for a maiden traveling alone, and — and — he knew me for one even in the half-light.”

As she spoke, standing there in the wet grass, my mind reverted to Brussel and his question anent a damsel — a question precipitating hostilities between us. My wits, never too brisk I fear, began to work.

“Well, the sergeant was not the only one interested in a maiden traveling alone,” I said. “For the officer I upset after you left probed me on the same matter.”

“Who was he?” she asked, her dark eyes growing wide.

“None less than a colonial renegade named Larry Brussel — And by the Lord!” I exclaimed, as the matter suddenly cleared in my brain, “I have eyes to see through a ladder! What know you of my old acquaintance, Brussel? Lawyer Dench is his uncle, and it is to Dench’s house that we are both going!”

I thought the girl was about to faint for she

fell up against the stone wall; but she pulled herself together in a moment. "Brussel?" she finally faltered. "Is—is he a nephew of Squire Dench? Oh, I cannot go there! I am undone!"

She shed no tears, at which I wondered, considering she was a woman; but her eyes were like stones, and her face in the moonlight was as white as marble.

"What have you against Larry Brussel?" I asked.

"Enough to wish never to see him," she returned. "My horse broke down soon after I left the Hampshire Grants, and I abandoned it. After that I would meet no officer, fearing it might be he, and when I first saw you it was as I came from hiding in a field to let an officer pass along the road."

"Ay? And that one was like to be Larry himself. He later came back to the White Horse."

"I fear it was," she said, helplessly. "And now what can I do?"

"Do as you intended," I returned, thinking I saw matters clearly. "Doubtless Brussel and the old man are at swords' points, the one being a royalist, the other a true patriot, albeit a stingy one. Moreover, the officer is of the barracks, and would no longer make his home with his uncle. You would there be in little danger of meeting



"I am a girl and not a boy—and my name is Louise Sheldon"

him; moreover, your guardian, for so I understand him to be, would protect you."

"Heaven grant that you are right!" she said.
"For I know of no other place to go."

"And why do you fear that coward?" I asked, wholly without tact, for it was none of my business.

"I—I cannot tell you now," she said. "I will only say that I hate, I detest him, and I fear him."

"I beg a thousand pardons," I returned.
"Keep your secrets."

"There really is little to tell," she said, in a desire to conciliate me, "but if you wish—"

"I do not wish," I replied, a trifle roughly. "My present desire is to get to Boston, and if you will have faith in a man about whom you know nothing I will see that you land safely in Dench's house. And this as much for my hatred for Brussel as consideration for yourself."

"Oh, I will go, I will go!" she exclaimed, clasping me by the arm. "You are an honorable man and a brave one—"

"Let that rest," I said, withdrawing my arm and stepping into the road. "I take it that no man is entitled to praise for being honorable, while as for his bravery — that must be proved."

And so I walked along, the maiden at my side, and I confess that I felt ashamed of myself for having been ill-humored with her; and stole many

a look at her face, comely enough under the plain cocked hat she wore; comely? ay, and more, for I saw that she would go to being well-nigh handsome were she properly dressed. But I had very little to say to her as we walked back in the wake of the British force, she hurrying her steps to keep up with my stride, a stride I would have moderated only that speed was, to my mind, of the utmost importance. And not a word of complaint did she make as she half ran beside me, her sweet lips apart as she panted. And I, with my great body swinging easily, had little but contempt for such weakness.

How I have since hated myself for my unthinking cruelty that night — for not being able to realize that a frail body may be the home of an indomitable spirit, of bravery, of honor and of devotion. Thank God my eyes were opened in time.

CHAPTER VII

SQUIRE DENCH

IT was close to sunrise ere we crossed the Neck and entered the town of Boston through the barrier-gates erected by Gage and of which I had heard so much. To my astonishment the "works," over which there had been so much ado, at that time amounted to little more than two ditches with banks of earth, there being a wide passage where the road ran betwixt them. There was no excitement about, and only a couple of sleepy-looking sentinels stood in our way. They let us pass freely enough, though had we been going out instead of in it would have been different, as I now know.

I was glad enough that there was no interruption to our progress, having been in some doubt about it. It is true that both guards woke up and looked sharply at us, but two countrymen going into town at that hour was not a suspicious circumstance at that time. That there were plenty of soldiers in the small barrack by the gate was plain, for the place was lighted, but there was no cannon in sight, nor was there anything aggressive looking save the start of a fortification.

Had it not been for the cloak that enveloped her figure I might never have brought the girl through without question; for now she was a weak and dependent woman, in all but appearance, and for the last two miles I had been obliged to assist her, and she hung on me like lead, being completely exhausted from excitement, worry, and unwonted exercise; but verily, had I then been able to glimpse the future I think I would have staggered at it, and been even weaker than the girl then at my side.

Over the old corduroy road we walked until we struck the thickly inhabited town, and at last I halted on Milk Street and opposite the door of Squire Thaddeus Dench, his name on the dingy brass plate appearing in exactly the same stage of neglect as when I had last seen it.

By then the girl was almost fainting from weariness, and dropped on the marble horse-block while I ran up the low step and rapped with the knocker.

Though the sun was barely above the horizon and the hour early the door was opened by Dench himself, and he was fully dressed. This did not occur to me as unusual, though I might have known it was, but I was too glad to reach my journey's end to note the alacrity with which he appeared when another man would have had scant time to get his legs out of bed.

He was no stranger to me, nor I to him. I had met him in years gone by and had often seen

him striding along the street, his tall, thin figure slightly bent, his hands clasped behind him. He had always looked poorly groomed, always seemed needing a shave, and always showed grains of snuff on the none too immaculate ruffles of his shirt. And now he was in all unchanged, even to the three days' stubble on his protruding chin and the snuff on his shirt-front. His gray hair was queued with a gray ribbon, and his gray clothing, his pale face, and the aforesaid gray stubble gave him an exceedingly flat appearance.

But his eyes made amends for the rest, light blue though they were. Like sparks from grinding steel they seemed, and one might have known the man was a lawyer, and a shrewd one, by the quick, sharp voice that went with his sharper glance.

I confess, patriot though he was, I never liked the man. I could not abide the soft rubbing together of his bony hands as he listened when being talked to; I did not like the stoop to his slight figure, nor the furtive expression of his too light eyes; I never liked his forever pleading poverty himself, and probing others for funds for the "cause." But he was a man whose sense was sound, or I thought so, and whose honor I considered above question, and he was just the man to give me advice in my present dilemma.

So I was glad to see him stick his head from the door, mightily, too, as though he was expecting

some one, for when he saw what he thought were two strangers he pursed his thin lips and brought his forehead into a scowl.

“What’s wanted?” he snapped.

“You are,” I snapped back.

“And who are you? ‘Tis the wrong house you have come to, I make no doubt.”

“Not if you are Lawyer Dench,” I said. “I am Allen Darcy, of Berkshire, and have come to shift a burden in the shape of Mistress Louise Selden, who has been traveling to see you.”

At that his manner altered in a twinkling, and I think he recoiled a step or so, but quickly recovered himself.

“You are Allen Darcy, son of Judge Darcy, of Berkshire?”

“Just that same.”

“And where — You said something of Louise Selden.”

“She is here, and nigh dead from fatigue.” And I pointed to the drooping figure on the horse-block. The man made some kind of a noise in his throat, but he did not appear surprised at the girl’s costume. He had us both into the house at once, closing the door behind him, and I saw I had made no mistake in bringing the maiden there; one might have thought that Dench had found a long-lost daughter instead of having had thrust upon him a girl I knew he had never seen. For he hung over like a superannuated lover, even

kissing her drawn cheek, at which last, somehow or other, I felt a quick resentment.

But the young lady was now so far gone in fatigue that I think any man might have kissed her without her caring, and when at last the old man put his arm around her and led her away, first locking the front door, she only held out her hand to me as if in thanks for what I had done for her, for never a word did she speak, though she smiled at me over her shoulder as she dragged herself up the broad stairway.

I thought it strange that Dench did not summon his housekeeper, for he had no wife, or some domestic to take charge of the girl; but he escorted her alone, and it was many a day ere I saw Miss Louise Selden again, though I then hoped to see her on the morrow. As for me, apparently ignored by the man, I walked into the first open room I saw, which happened to be the lawyer's office at the end of the great hall, and waited for him to appear. This room was a fair-sized one, and being an attorney's, was well lined with books, while its furniture bespoke the owner to be well-to-do if not wealthy.

The apartment was close and hot, as if a lamp had burned there all night, and being warm and tired myself, I took off my hat and sat down while I looked round, wondering at the closed windows and the meaning of so many doors in so unpretentious a room.

Presently Dench came in and it was easy to see that he was pleased about something, for his face was wrinkled into what was meant to be a smile as he seated himself before me, his back to the light.

"And now, son of my old friend," he said, scraping the stubble on his chin with his clawlike fingers, "I know you wish to see me. Your young charge is well taken care of and will rest. She has inferred that you needed my assistance. I will hear your story, sir."

Now, being practically at my journey's end, and having had no restrictions as to Dench put upon me by my father, I felt warranted in at last speaking freely and so I retailed the story of the night's work, from my rescue of the girl to our arrival in front of his house.

I left out nothing, though I touched modestly on my bout with his nephew, and was ready to justify myself if he caviled at it. But he did not, only softly rubbing his hands and nodding his head, his sharp eyes boring me the while except when he shifted them to the tall clock in the corner, which was often enough to have me remember it. When I had done he said:

"You need have no compunctions regarding your treatment of my nephew. He and I have drawn apart. You acted as a man should — as I would have done with him had I been able. As

for the rest, I will stand behind you with the law, though you will understand that my political sympathies have put me out of favor with the authorities, even as it has you. My son, I heard about and honor you for your patriotic act in putting down Judge Evers."

"And you knew of it?" I exclaimed.

"Yes, my son; and who does not? And I — er — understand that an important errand brings you to Boston. Am I not right?"

"You are right, sir," I said, "though it bothers me to guess how you knew unless my father wrote you unknown to me."

The lawyer brought his eyelids close together and smiled. "I think you may trust your father's discretion as well as my ability to keep a secret, my son. Perhaps I can help you."

"Hardly," I said, "seeing that it is a personal matter betwixt myself and Doctor Joseph Warren under whom I hope to learn to be a leech."

"And is that all?" he asked, with an air of quick disappointment.

"Nay," said I. "My father told me it was likely that you could locate Mr. Adams for me, as I have important matter to deliver as soon as may be."

"Ah — of what nature?"

"In the way of letters from Doctor Benjamin Franklin."

The man did not turn a hair as he heard this; and after a moment of delay in which I thought he was trying to locate Mr. Adams, he said:

"I have reason to believe that Mr. Adams is out of town, the warrant signed against him and Hancock having made him a fugitive. But, sir, as a friend of the cause I think I can direct you to him. Of course you could not trust those letters to me?"

The last was a question, pure and simple.

"Nor to any other man," I returned. "They are of the utmost importance, and I was strictly enjoined to —"

"Of course — of course," he interrupted. "You are wiser than most men of your age. But come — you must be tired out from your night's work. Come with me — come with me; by sunset I may be able to point out Mr. Adams to you."

And he fully expected to, the double-faced villain, undoubtedly believing that both Hancock and Adams had been seized in the raid of which he was perfectly aware. I then had no suspicion of the man's duplicity, though I was not long in ignorance of it, and followed him up-stairs and into a small back room, where he left me, telling me I need not rise for breakfast — that he would send it to me. And so he went out after wishing me a good rest.

Now when I think of this old wretch my blood boils; but then I had not the first suspicion that he

was not all he appeared to be, and congratulated myself on the easy termination of my trip and my wisdom in going to Dench for advice.

Though tired I was not sleepy, and after taking off my shoes to ease my feet, and throwing my coat on the bed, I went to the single window of the room and looked out.

Close to the house I could see little because of the extension roof beneath my window; but beyond it the view was broad enough. Some twenty feet from the extension, and toward a corner of the house, was a well, while from it and running toward the house was a ditch recently opened, the flag-stones that had covered it lying strewn along its side. I did not know that the well was a running one, and the ditch intended for a pipe to conduct the water to the house; but the lack of knowledge mattered nothing then, though later the ditch mattered everything to me. I glanced at it casually, then looked beyond it to where many trees were standing over toward the next street; but the abutting garden was divided from the lawyer's property by a high fence in which was a gate. As I stood there in the growing day, it now being close to seven o'clock, I saw a negress, a woman of immense figure, go from the extension and draw water from the well, and when she disappeared there was no sign of life in any direction, and the embargoed city seemed like a deserted one, it was so quiet.

I turned from the window wondering in what part of the house lay the girl who had been my companion, when my ear caught the ruffle of hoofs going at speed on the street beyond. I again turned to the window just as the sound stopped, but my curiosity was more than satisfied, for as I wondered what could make one ride so fast so early, the door, or gate, in the board fence opened to admit a man, a British officer, as I knew by his uniform, and I staggered back as I recognized him as no less a person than Lawrence Brussel, the same whom I had laid on the broad of his back hardly eight hours before.

What in the devil was he doing here?

He did not go in at the rear entrance, for I had not fairly recovered from my surprise at seeing him before he was hammering at the front door and making as great an ado as if his case was a matter of life and death.

That something was up I had not the least doubt, and to me that "something" was that Brussel had tracked me to his uncle's house, and despite the fact that the two had drawn apart, he had followed from a desire for vengeance.

I could then conceive no other possible reason for his coming, and his hurried manner warranted the conclusion; anyway, instead of running down to meet the man I quietly stepped into the hall, and protected by the gloom from being seen from below, leaned over the balustrade. Even then I

could not see the front door, but my ears served me where my eyes failed.

I had hardly arrived at my post when I heard Dench shuffle through the hall and open the door, and his cry of surprise was unfeigned as he saw his nephew. But there was no indication of enmity or even estrangement between the two. The first words were by Brussel:

“What a time I’ve had getting here!”

“I looked for you hours ago, and have been waiting well-nigh all night,” was the old man’s response, and at that moment the devil of suspicion against him flew to me, lit on my shoulder and whispered in my ear.

“Well, it is cursed lucky that I am here at all,” said Brussel, stepping into the hall. “I am undone in every way.”

“But they got Hancock and Adams?”

“No — curse it — no! The whole thing is a mistake! Gage has been fooled! The rebels were out in force, and when I came away they were driving Pitcairn’s regiment like sheep! Good God! Think of a horde of farmers driving a king’s regiment. Pitcairn will never hold up his head again. He sent a wild call for help, and I met Lord Percy hurrying to his relief, but as I am on leave and not detailed to take part in the muss I came right here. For you and me there is worse news. The girl has escaped.”

The man’s voice was unguarded.

"Hush — hush!" said Dench, evidently clapping a hand over his nephew's mouth.

"Damn it! Don't do that! I am no child! What do you mean?" asked Brussel, in a high-pitched and impatient voice.

"You ought to be gagged," returned the old man. "You are giving me stale news. Nothing has been lost. Get into the office; I want to talk to you."

Here was "Matter for a May morning"; here was food for thought — and for rapid thought. To my mind the girl who had "escaped" could be none but the girl I had rescued from the sergeant and who had spoken of Hotfoot Brussel in terms of execration. It was no time for me to consider the ethics of my position in Thaddeus Dench's house. Something unusual was in the air and I felt that it behooved me to learn the nature of it, if possible, and that for the sake of the young lady for whom, in a measure, I felt responsible. That I might learn anything regarding my own interests I did not dream.

Therefore, with hardly a moment of hesitation I determined to let the finer points of honor blow to where they might; so, without returning to my room I went softly down the stairs in my unshod feet, and within the space of ten seconds my ear was against the panel of the office-door.

It is fair adage that listeners hear no good of

themselves, and I was no exception to the rule, for hardly had I glued my ear to the door than as distinct as if I were in the room came the words from Dench:

“ Sit down and listen to me, Larry. The fat is not in the fire. Tell me your story quietly.” I heard a chair rasp on the polished floor; then came Brussel’s voice:

“ There’s little to tell, but there is much I wish to know. The girl got by me in disguise, an old enemy of mine helping her, though he little dreamed of who she is. I met the fellow later.”

“ Ay, I know; and he manhandled you.”

Brussel gave an exclamation of genuine astonishment. “ And how could you know? ” he asked.

“ Because he told me of it himself. There are two fools up-stairs, one the biggest fool for one of his years I ever beheld. You may soon ease your spleen on him, but not until I have from him certain letters. This will be your business. Do you follow me? ”

“ Are you speaking of — ”

“ I am speaking of Allen Darcy,” interrupted the old man. “ He is now up-stairs and probably asleep. You — ”

Brussel evidently bounded from his seat.

“ Do you mean to tell me that Allen Darcy is under this roof? By Heaven, I’ll have his life. Where does he lie? ”

As he spoke, or rather shouted, he evidently sprang for the door, for his hand turned the knob, and then I started back determined to close with him the instant he appeared.

CHAPTER VIII

EAVESDROPPING

BUT the door did not open then, and Heaven only knows whether this was fortunate or otherwise, but as the knob turned I was aware that Brussel's hand was jerked from it by the old man, who had jumped forward, for his high-pitched voice was now close to the panels.

"Have you gone crazy, you young idiot?" demanded Dench. "Are you going to spoil everything, like a mad boy? Do as you wish later, but if you go up to him now you will ruin me, if not yourself! Sit down; sit down and listen to reason. Darcy is safe enough; and when I have told you more, it is likely you will forget the fellow. I have the cake of the two about baked; would you make dough of it?"

I heard them retreat from the door, and lost no time in again getting my ear to it, though at each moment I expected to be discovered by some domestic. However, I soon lost thought of any risk from that direction.

"What the deuce do you mean by two of them?" asked Brussel, evidently seating himself.

"You'll know in time," returned Dench, lowering his voice, which, though still distinct, quivered from past excitement. "Let me tell you, in the first place, that Darcy thinks I am yet of the rebel committee of correspondence, and, therefore, he has abounding faith in me."

"If he should know, or suspect, that I had been but spying, his confidence would be lost and I would be in danger from him, for he is a reckless young devil, as was shown by his treatment of Judge Evers. The judge told me of it himself. He could hang Darcy with a good grace."

"He always was a reckless devil," interposed Brussel. "He gained the name of Devil years ago when —"

"I care nothing how he gained his name," interrupted the old man, "but at this present moment he has letters on his person which, could I present to Gage, would be the making of me and intrench me against another matter going wrong. And they probably contain information which would compromise many who are yet unsuspected."

"And I promise you shall have them when I again lay hands on the villain."

"Then, there is the matter of more importance to both of us."

"What can be more important?" sneered Brussel.

"What great matter is interesting you and me at present?" snapped back Dench. "Is Louise

Selden no great matter? You know how we stand."

"I can cursed well guess how I stand with her!" was the surly reply. "Somehow, she learned I was going to her, and so she took immediate occasion to run away, dressed as a boy. I got leave, as you know, and traveled up to the Hampshire Grants, only to find her just gone. She left a note with her fool of a sister, who, however she wishes me as a brother-in-law, hasn't wit enough to influence the girl. No one knew in what direction she escaped, though I learned later. Like an ass I went to please you, and like an ass came back. I had but just reached barracks and reported when Colonel Dalrymple ordered me out to Cambridge with a picked squad to intercept any information of the raid going abroad. I was to be considered relieved on the passing of Pitcairn.

"Well, at the White Horse I met with Darcy, not knowing him at first. It matters nothing how it came about, but he always hated me, from envy, likely; anyway, he took me by surprise — foully and treacherously by surprise — and threw me, then, fearing my vengeance, he ran away at once. Later, Pitcairn went by, though in the meantime I had learned enough from the sergeant there to believe that Louise had appeared at the White Horse under the name of Louis Selden. I had told him to be on the watch for a disguised woman, and he suspected her and held her for my coming.

However, she appealed to this Darcy, who was in the coffee-room at the time, and he assisted her to run away, to that end assaulting the sergeant. You may imagine how I feel to be twice flouted by the same man on the same night — to say nothing of the girl. It would have been easy to catch either had I the hound with me, but —”

“ Ay! ” interrupted Dench with an impatient sneer in his voice. “ More’s the pity if you think that the brute, having caught and mangled them, would settle everything! Why was he not trailing at your heels as usual? ”

“ Because he came nigh to killing a soldier last week. He has turned ugly, and I, myself, have grown afraid of him. I gave him to my sergeant to care for for a time. Let that pass. I came here to give you the facts, thinking the girl might point toward you, as would be natural.”

“ You are right, my lad,” said Dench. “ She did point toward me; and at this moment she is under my roof. The two came together.”

“ The devil! ” The exclamation from Brussel was forcible.

“ There — there; sit down,” said the old man as his nephew again sprang to his feet. “ All is not plain sailing by any means! I wish she were elsewhere, though I appeared to be glad at her coming! She is here, of course, for her rights under her father’s will. Her sister has the home-stead; Louise has cash and the proceeds of Selden’s

investments. What shall I say to her when she demands her patrimony, already due? Shall I tell her I have lost it? Shall I tell her that, as her guardian, I have been false to my trust — false to her father — and all on account of my worthless nephew, for the love of whom and whom to satisfy I supplied with funds not my own that he might cancel his so-called debts of honor? If she should get the ear of Gage, who is mighty punctilious in these matters, and not at all like Hutchinson, and tell him the Lawyer Dench had defaulted, where would I be? And where would you be were the facts known? It would come out that you were aware of the defalcation, that you gambled away another's money. You would be cashiered, or, if not, placed in a position where you would be compelled to resign; and then you would be — a beggar."

"A beggar?"

"Ay, Larry, a beggar; for I am as near ruin as a man can be — and on your account. I could not give the girl ten pounds of the thousand I owe her. You drained me so low with your infernal scheme of riches — a scheme that went wrong — that I took speculative chances to make good my losses, and — I failed!"

"Failed! You failed?" There was now no truculence in Brussel's voice; it showed undisguised consternation.

"Ay, I failed to be fortunate because at the

time my venture was hanging in air his majesty embargoed the port of Boston. You know the effect of that. All business ceased, and has since lain dead. But my condition is not known — not even suspected. Lawyer Dench is yet a man of integrity and fair fortune."

"I see — I see," was Brussel's slow reply. "And this rather eases my hand. Why should I now marry the girl? The motive appears to be lost."

"I think not, my son," said the old man with a touch of irony in his voice. "Louise Selden, as a woman, is a prize to be proud of, and by marrying her you can save me — and yourself."

"As if I were in danger!" said Brussel. "But how save you?"

"Because, as her husband, her property is yours, and then the affair is between you and me alone. You will, of course, give me time, and as soon as the port reopens, as it will when the king has punished this rebel rabble, all will turn out well, and my ventures will realize more than enough to recoup my losses. Do you follow me?"

"Oh, I follow you readily enough," was the return, the speaker's tones warming. "You would make a cat's-paw of me to save yourself! I'll be damned if I marry her now; and she would rather be cursed than marry me. I tell you she hates me."

"But have you not a way with women? You used to boast of it. You can convince her."

"Curse me if I try," was the quick return. "It means to fetter myself."

"Then perhaps yon gentle Devil, now up-stairs, will try," returned Dench, in a smooth, sarcastic voice. "The two must have been together for hours, and young women have long tongues. He may know something of her affairs."

"Let him know. I have him yet to deal with," interrupted Brussel. "I won't marry her — that's flat."

"Flat, is it? Is it so?" returned Dench, an ugly note in his voice. "Forget not this, my self-sufficient nephew. You have driven me to the wall, and now you compel me to tell you that if you go against my wishes in the least I will bring out a certain note you think was destroyed long since. Do you take your uncle for a fool, sir? I'll ruin you, if you persist in ruining me."

I was being rapidly informed, and a fine batch of family history was opened to me in the last threat of the old man. Nor were my thoughts interrupted, as for some time silence followed Dench's words. Presently Brussel spoke.

"Well, sir, you have the whip-hand of me, and hold me by the throat. I might have known you lied about having burned Colonel Dalrymple's note."

"I have mentioned no names," said Dench, speaking quickly.

"And what if I fail with the girl after honestly trying to get her?" asked Brussel.

"We will remove her," answered the lawyer.

"My Lord! Would you kill —"

"Don't be an ass, Larry. Who spoke of killing a woman? You might knife a man, he being an enemy, but a woman, no. I mean we would place her where she could not talk — or where her talk would be harmless to us."

"Ah, yes — a prisoner somewhere — until times mend."

"Precisely; and they will mend shortly. Gage will have those arch-rebels in limbo and then the movement will fall. The port will reopen. In the meantime you will ingratiate yourself with Louise, and I will feed her with delays and promises."

"And that fellow up-stairs?"

"Possibly he will be a little difficult, but as he is a rebel —"

"He is more than that. In a spirit of brag he enlisted under a false name. He's a deserter from his majesty's forces."

"Ay? Is it so? Then we have him. Go you for a file of men and arrest him; a search will discover the letters, and then he can pass to his deserts."

"By the hot foot of Lucifer! I'll arrest him myself," said Brussel.

"Nay, but it is too great a risk," interposed Dench. "Suppose Louise has told him her history — and what she fears; suppose he should talk at his trial and —"

"Mark me well, Uncle Dench," interrupted Brussel, evidently getting to his feet, "I agree to all you ask save this. I will marry the girl if I can, and compound your villainy afterward, but I am to have my own way with Darcy; and rest assured that when I am done with him, he will talk no more. Dost comprehend? I am a king's officer and have the right to kill a deserter. I have been outraged, and by Heaven, I'll be revenged."

I heard the man striding up and down the floor as he spoke excitedly. It was full time for me to be going, and as I reached that conclusion, I realized that the precious letters were in my coat which I had thrown on the bed up-stairs.

Also, it would not be feasible to leave the house unshod, and I straightened myself for the purpose of returning to my room and obtaining my coat and foot-gear, when, to my consternation, for I had heard no indication of it, the office-door opened and Brussel, with the old man just behind him, stood within three feet of me.

CHAPTER IX

AT CLOSE RANGE

UNDER the circumstances I had little time to think, nor did I think, but I was moved through intuition which same sixth sense has stood me in good stead more than once in my life. The matter evidently dominating my brain at that moment was that I must get possession of the letters — that without them I would be weak.

Brussel had his drawn sword in his hand, and the reason he did not at once use it was because my presence took him more by surprise than his did me, and as he hung in the wind at sight of me, and that for the space of perhaps ten seconds, I acted in a totally different way than I would have done had he appeared when he first approached the door.

At all events, instead of throwing myself on him I did the very opposite, for, turning, I ran at full speed along the hall and up the stairs, gaining my room and getting into my coat, as if the latter act were to settle the whole business.

Undoubtedly Brussel thought my flight was determined through fear of him, though why he should have thought so after what had passed

between us is still a puzzle. It is likely that he would have put after me at once, but it took time for him to pull his wits together and realize that the secret between himself and his uncle was in the hands of a third party. At all events there must two or three minutes have passed ere I heard his feet on the stairs. By then I was into my coat and had slipped my feet into my shoes; all my late fatigue had vanished, and I had about determined to go out of the window to the roof beneath it and there make my escape by dropping from the leads; indeed, I was half-across the room when Brussel dashed open the door.

I marked the fire in his eyes as plainly as I did the sword in his hand, and was well aware that his present desperation made him infinitely more dangerous to me than he had been when he menaced me in the coffee-room of the White Horse.

Behind him came Dench, panting from unwonted exertion, but I only had a glance at him, for with his entry Brussel seemed to divine my object. As I halted he leaped between me and the window.

“Surrender, you deserter!” he shouted, lifting his sword above his head.

At that juncture I might have turned toward the door, knocked down the old man who stood in the way and fled to the hall below; but I could not see how I would be benefited by the move, as long before I could unfasten the front door I would be

cut down from behind, and I was ignorant of the passage leading to the rear. My way appeared to be blocked in every direction.

But I was in no mood to surrender to Brussel, whom I now hated as the devil is supposed to hate holy-water. I had forced issues with him once and might again, only I could no longer use my former tactics of running under his sword.

Having been made wise by experience, he now lowered his weapon until only its point threatened me, and, of necessity, I backed away from him to avoid his vicious thrust, making my way slowly toward the bed. I was perfectly aware that I need expect no mercy from this man; and if by chance he got me into his power and turned me over to the authorities, my case would be quite as desperate. There would be three counts against me: my exploit with the royal judge, my bearing treasonable correspondence, and my being a technical deserter from the British army, the last being solely due to my own crass foolishness.

However, I did not think my offenses would ever come to trial, and for reasons I had overheard, Brussel expected to make an end to me then and there; it was in the blackness of his face, in his compressed lips; in the very glare of his eyes, and I knew that if I did not tamely submit and make him a cold-blooded murderer, I must fight as I had never fought before. My every instinct moved me to die fighting.

It is a well-worn axiom that while there is life there is hope, and I was not yet dead; as for hope — what man of my age is for long without it? Therefore, as I have said, I backed slowly toward the bed, my eyes in the meantime playing round the unfamiliar room, hoping to catch sight of something that might stand me as a weapon. But there was nothing of the kind about; the fireplace was empty of its usual furniture, and there was not even a stick of wood with which I could defend myself; as for the chairs, they were either too unwieldy or too distant. I was certainly at bay.

As I reached the bed, followed step by step by the still thrusting, but now silent officer, I became aware that a third party had appeared on the scene. It was Louise Selden, who, roused by the noise of three men tearing up-stairs, had left her room.

I can see her now, her fine eyes wide-open in surprise or consternation, her beautiful hair, loose from its confining wig, streaming over her shoulders. She stood by the door, one hand on her heart, while Dench stood in the opening, his arm across it to bar her from entering the room.

I noticed these things in a flash and without losing sight of my advancing enemy. At last I reached the bed, a ponderous, four-posted affair, and when I laid my hand on it I knew I had attained the limits of my ability to retreat.

But not the limits of my resources. For as my

hand fell on the spread, my fingers instinctively clutched the fluffy stuff, and without the least calculation, but in a spirit of desperation, I suddenly pulled the great quilt from the bed and swung it toward Brussel.

It did not envelop him, as perhaps I had hoped it would, but the mass of material caught the point of his advancing sword, bearing it down and becoming entangled with the weapon. Here was my chance, and I took immediate advantage of it. With a bound I was on the officer, but as my own feet caught in the cloth I did not get an effective hold on him, though my propelled weight caused him to stagger back and lose his balance, and in an instant we were struggling on the floor, both of us enmeshed in the folds of the spread.

At that moment, and later, when we were clawing at each other like two frenzied cats, I did not have a doubt of the result. It took me some time to get my legs free of the trammeling cloth, but when at last I was free, I managed to get a clutch on his throat and the next instant I was astride his body, my fingers sinking into his flesh, but not before he had again let out a cry for help, as he had done at the White Horse. Little feeling did I have for him as I marked his eyes bulge in his distress, and his body writhe under me. My way was now plain. I would choke him into complete submission, dispose of the old man with a blow, take a short leave of the girl, and go from the

house; but these plans, like many another, failed to materialize, for as I rode his heaving body and marked his tongue protrude, I heard a scream from the girl, and at the same instant I received a sickening blow on the head.

The room leaped in a sea of whirling flame and blood, then all became pitch-black, and I was swinging helpless in endless space.

CHAPTER X

IMMURED

WHEN finally I came to my senses I was far too bewildered to know more than that I was not dead and hurtling through space, but my surroundings did not enlighten me as to where I was.

Deep darkness still encumbered me, for, though I opened my eyes, not a ray of light greeted them; and I was beset with a general and profound feeling of discomfort. Then it suddenly came to me that I was blind, and the shock of horror pulled my poor wits together as nothing else would have done.

I lay perfectly still while my brain steadied, and from the dead silence about me I concluded that I was alone.

I say I lay still, but it was because I was unable to move; and yet I felt nothing of the compression of bonds. I did not think of bonds. I only knew that I was blind and miserable, but did not attempt to fathom the cause. I now know that I was bound only by physical exhaustion.

Like an owl I lay with my eyes wide open, my brain dancing from terror; but I gave my thoughts

no voice. I could not; I was dumb as well as motionless.

I presume that nature at length asserted itself and I slept, for when I again opened my eyes it was to behold a square of dim light above my head, and it came to me with a rush that I was looking at a narrow window.

Heaven knows my joy at discovering I was not blind; and that, with the sleep I had, did much to pull me together. And now I could move, though the act of stretching out my hand gave me a sense of pain. And well it might.

I found I was lying on bare stone, and without more covering than the clothes I had on. I was stiffened by cold and dampness.

Then something of the past asserted itself, and I began to put two and two together until at last much of the matter bewildering me began to clear. I rolled over, every bone and muscle in my body protesting at the movement; but finally I managed to get to my knees and look about me.

That I was in a prison-cell was my first thought; the floor and walls were of stone, the roof of rough-hewn timbers, while the feeble light that brought out the general features of the place came through a very small window close to the rafters.

The window was not barred, which I thought strange; but it was too small to pass such a body as mine. However, it took me but a few minutes to determine I was in no regular prison, but in an

underground apartment which was, or had been, a storeroom; for against the wall were two empty barrels, while a row of hooks along a rafter, and a hanging shelf, now empty, gave an inkling of the nature of the place. I was undoubtedly in a cellar, but where and under what conditions were matters to be guessed at.

My reasonable supposition was that after I had become unconscious I had been transferred from Dench's house and was in the hands of the authorities, who, owing to the ticklish nature of the times and the peculiar character of my offense, were keeping me apart from common criminals.

Doubtless, thought I, I am in no less a place than the cellar of Provence House, where in good time I will be visited by Gage or his inquisitor.

But I was too weak to more than surmise. My head pained me, and, bringing my hand to it, I discovered that my hair was matted; and then there came the full recollection of how I had fought and fallen.

I now saw that I was bloody from head to foot, but the flow had ceased and the blood was dry. How long could I have lain in this cell? And why had I been thrown there without even a truss of straw under me? I could not tell, but by the gnawing in my stomach I thought it must have been many hours. I was becoming ravenously hungry and correspondingly thirsty.

I crawled under the window, raised myself by

means of the rough stones, and attempted to call through the opening some two feet above my head; but my voice was only a feeble croak. Then on my hands and knees I explored the cell inch by inch.

The window, set in a pit a foot or two below the surface of the ground, showed but a strip of sky, and by the gradual brightening of the blue I guessed I had been a prisoner all that night and most of the previous day.

And that there was no means of escape from this hole I saw at once. The door was of heavy oak, fastened securely, and without lock, latch, or knob on my side of it. A shallow transom was above it, but the opening was only a narrow slit intended for ventilation, and would not have permitted the passage of a small dog.

With infinite pains I rolled an empty barrel to the door, climbed to its top, and peered through the transom. Only the sight of deep darkness beyond rewarded me for my exertion. In a frenzy I beat the door with fists and feet, calling as loud as my strength would permit; but this only served to exhaust me, and I fell to the floor in a state of complete collapse.

I do not know how long I crouched there with my eyes on the window; all day, probably, for the light faded until it was pitch-dark, and then I knew that night had fallen again. That night was filled with fevered visions, and betwixt hunger, thirst,

and the pain in my head I felt as ready to die as ever did a man of twenty-six.

I could no longer think clearly, and the oppressive silence became like a veritable menace; but I recollect wondering, if I was thrown into this hole to die, why was it that some one did not come and investigate my case? As a dead man I would not be long tolerated in any building, and I surely must have been close to death when I was cast into this dungeon.

It was all a puzzle.

I slept after a time, and woke clear-headed and stronger, though still in a pitiable state and still crouched in the spot where I had fallen. I was cold, hungry, and wildly thirsty, but too listless to move. The day had come again, and as my eyes roved aimlessly they caught sight of an object close to me, and it had not been there before. I drew it toward me. It was a package nearly a foot long, wrapped in what might have been an old towel, and it was tied with a bit of string.

My curiosity was at once roused, but it was with difficulty that I finally managed to break the cord, first discovering that my pockets had been rifled, as when I felt for my knife I found it gone, also, that my money-belt had been stripped from me. My letters! They, too, were missing, though in my lowered state the fact hardly troubled me; indeed, the letters were forgotten in my interest in the bundle. Slowly I unrolled the cloth, hoping

for nothing, expecting nothing; but when I opened the last fold my eyes suddenly blazed.

There was bread — a whole loaf — and a leather bottle, which from its dampness I knew contained water. As I clutched at them something white fell to the floor, but little I heeded it. Like a panther athirst for blood, I tore the cork from the mouth of the flask and drank without waiting to taste the bottle's contents; it might have been poison sent to hurry me off instead of being pure water, but pure water it was.

The edge taken from my thirst, I set my teeth in the loaf and tore it apart. I must have made a pitiful sight as, bloody and disheveled, I crammed my mouth full of bread while tears of weakness and thankfulness were coursing down my cheeks. I do not apologize for my unheroic aspect and my fiendish appetite for food and drink. I was then but an animal, deprived of its rights, and my spiritual sense was dulled.

A few moments later, having disposed of the last drop and crumb, and with something akin to the feeling of a normal man, though not a high-tempered one, I wondered who had cast the food to me, for it had undoubtedly been pushed through the transom. And then my eyes fell on the neglected white square which had dropped from the bundle, and reaching for it with a new interest in life, I saw it was a paper — ay, a note. It contained but few words.

If you are alive, throw cloth and bottle back to the cellar passage. Make no outcry.

That was all. There was nothing said as to who was standing my friend; nothing of the condition of things outside. With my brain steadied by food and drink, albeit they were but bread and water, I began to reason connectedly concerning my plight.

So I was, as I had thought, in a cellar compartment. But where? The question appeared to be of easy solution now. I had but one friend who could have known of the treacherous blow which had struck me down, and she, Louise Selden. She would hardly be in any house but Dench's, seeing it was his interest to keep her there for a time, and, therefore, in Dench's cellar I must be, and the girl, guessing at my state, had found some way to smuggle food to me. Of that I was certain and equally certain that if I gave the required signal it would not go unnoticed by her or her confederate.

Now clearly enough I remembered that she was marked for ruin, and within me there surged a desire to warn her against the plot. But I was in no position to do it, for my sense told me to implicitly obey instructions, and, moreover, I had no means of communicating with her.

Nor could I even write an answer to her note, if indeed it was from her. However, I lost no time in throwing bottle and towel through the

transom; their presence in the passage would mean nothing to one not in the secret.

The day passed in monotonous silence. If any one came near me, and events proved that there did, I was not aware of it, though I kept my ears trained for the slightest noise in the passage. Ay, I did more. I armed myself with a barrel stave, hoping and fearing that Brussel or his uncle would come to learn of my state. But neither disturbed me. As evening came on apace my hope fell with the return of keen hunger. The light waned until the outline of the window was lost, and just as I felt hopeless I heard a thud on the floor of my cell and then knew I had not been forgotten.

This time the package contained meat as well as bread and water, but the note I felt for and found could not be read until morning; so after eating I curled myself up on the cursed stone floor and slept. And possibly slept with one eye open, for I was up and crowding close to the window at the crack of dawn. As soon as it was light enough I read the note:

Heaven be praised for your being alive. If you are sick and helpless, throw the towel as before, but if you can work for escape, tear it in two before throwing it out. I cannot liberate you, as D—— has the key and sits so that no one can go to the cellar unseen during the day.

The city is in a state of siege. The royal forces were nearly ruined on their retreat from Concord. No one can leave or enter Boston, and the excitement is awful.

B—— has not been here since the disaster to Gage. In the growing confusion there may be a chance for you. More to-night. L.

With this my pulse began to bound, and strange to say it was the information anent the king's forces which most appealed to me. There had plainly been a clash between the troops and the people in which the latter had won. The first blow had been struck, and the war, which had long been anticipated, was now on. Boston was beleaguered! It was wonderful, and here I was mewed up like a monk in a cell, without the ability to take a hand in the glorious stir.

But by the grace of Heaven and the faithfulness of Louise Selden, I soon would have my freedom; for of course, it was my late companion who was standing by me. The poor weakling, for whom I had held little respect while I thought her a boy, was now supporting me and holding me from the great abyss; and she evidently had confidence in her own wit. Mentally I groveled before her. I did not then know that a woman's weakness is her strength, but I knew I owed my life to Louise Selden, and then and there I swore I would reciprocate her faithfulness to me. If only I were free!

I tore the towel in two with a vigor that told of returning spirits, and at once cast the pieces through the transom. Would I work for escape? Ay, that I would. Only show me the chance!

How that day dragged may be guessed, and

with what a zest I seized upon the bundle when it came to me that night may easily be imagined. But I could get no clew as to who was my direct benefactor. I was certain it was not Louise, for the shuffling steps that went down the stone corridor were not those of a young person, nor of one who was in a great hurry.

The bundle I unrolled was very much heavier than any I had received, and that not altogether from the generous supply of provisions. For besides food, it contained an old cold-chisel, a couple of candles and a flint and steel.

The feel of the candles told me their nature, and after a long struggle with the flint and steel, I managed to get one lighted and turned to the letter accompanying the package. It stimulated me as nothing else would have done — nothing save actual liberty.

My dear friend:

This, like the others, will be conveyed to you by Letty, the negress servant of the house, and without whom I fear we would both be undone. You will find the means of working for your escape, and I see no other way than to remove the stones of the foundation.

There is an uncovered ditch running from the well to the house, which ends four feet under the surface of the ground and against the foundation or the wall of the room you are in. That is a corner compartment, and the ditch strikes it exactly six feet from the angle, if Letty has measured right, and four feet below the top course of stone.

If you can remove a portion of the wall at that point,

you can easily break a way out, as the workmen have loosened the outside facing. They were about to repair a break in the pipe that runs from the well to the kitchen above you, but the general confusion has put a stop to the work.

D—— appears troubled, and told me, who am acting a part, that you are yet alive and being taken care of; that you are an escaped criminal, and on the morning of our arrival had been discovered robbing the house. He tells me you are being held by him pending the settlement of the confusion. I know this to be a lie. He is not harsh to me; quite the contrary.

Political situation more acute. There have been several skirmishes round Boston Neck, but nothing decisive. No one can move without a pass from Gage. I should return home, but cannot go until I see you safe. Have not seen B—— for several days.

When you have made an opening large enough to pass through, tie a knot in the cloth you throw out and await instructions.

L.

Though I was at that time far from being in love with the writer, I pressed this missive to my lips; it was my only means of thanking her. And so she was acting a part! Why, unless she had discovered the character of the man from whom she had expected protection? That might be as it happened; I would soon enlighten her; in the meantime I had work to do.

With candle in one hand and chisel in the other, I went to the point the note indicated, and then saw what I had not before noticed. I would not be obliged to calculate where to begin my labor, for there, leading from above and turning into the

foundation below the frost-line was the pipe itself, so in the shadow, so rusty and cobweb-covered that I had not marked it.

I remembered having seen the ditch from the window of my room; I remembered having seen the big negress at the well, but never imagined that either would ever serve me. Here, then, was the point to begin work, and that work was to remove the mortar-set foundation-stones one by one. It bade fair to be an endless job — a heart-rending job — but it was with liberty for its object. I set down the candle and went feverishly at the business.

As the blows of a hammer, had I possessed one, would have betrayed me, I was obliged to pick and scratch at the mortar, removing it bit by bit. I attacked the smallest stone first, one the size of my hand, a mere filling stone, but it was midnight before I had it out. Then I slept.

The next day I worked desperately, and at night received my usual supply of food, but no note. By then I had removed two more stones, one a large one. Day and night alternated, but with scant rest for me. As I progressed, the work became easier, and on the fifth day I rested, for early that morning I discovered that a push would send down the last few stones, making an opening large enough to crawl through.

And each night I received my food, though no word came with it. When at length all was ready

I knotted the cloth in which my food always came, and threw it through the transom.

That day seemed a year long; I thought the night would never come. And when at last it did come there came that which I had long looked for. It must have been near nine o'clock when I heard the bundle fall, and I lighted the remains of the second candle, for I had saved it by working much in the dark, and found a note which I seized upon as more than food and drink. As I read it, it became evident that I had completed my work none too soon.

I have been impatiently awaiting your signal. It comes in the nick of time. Much has happened, but cannot go into detail. Know something of the perfidy of B—— and D—— and the cause of their enmity toward you. I have your letters to Mr. A—— sewn in my clothing and will give them to you at first opportunity.

I must leave this house, and at once. Have made arrangements to escape, and hope to take you with me. When you have read this, make your way to the ditch and thence to the next street in the rear, and await my coming with Letty.

I can no longer disguise myself, yet I think you will know me. Follow, without coming too near, until I stop; then join me. If you are halted and questioned, as you may be, the city being under martial law, use your wits, as I see no way to help you. If by chance we cannot meet, accept my thanks for what you have done for me, and may we meet in happier days.

In an hour from now I shall start, as D—— is to go out early.

May Heaven protect us both.

L.

CHAPTER XI

“ ‘TWIXT DEVIL AND DEEP”

SHE to thank me for what I had done for her! It sounded almost like irony, though I knew then, as well as later, that she was not given to flippancy. My hands fairly shook as I read this letter. What had happened to distress her? Yet I could easily imagine.

Brussel had been persecuting her, and in all probability Dench had unfurled his flag and now sailed under his true colors as a villain. I would soon know all, for I was about to be free.

The impending movement so tested my weakened nerves that for a time I was incapable of rapid action, but when I had eaten and the shock of the letter had passed I was a new man and ready for whatever offered. Hurriedly I picked out the stones I had put back into their places, and in less than half an hour from the time I had read the letter I was pushing against the frail obstruction that yet barred me from freedom.

The wall went down with a clatter as the stones fell into the ditch, and I feared the noise would betray me, though I did not wait for an alarm. Squeezing my body through the opening, I found

myself under the stars. It was a mild night, almost windless, and the silence was profound. It was hard to realize that I was in a storm-center of passion and hate.

For a moment I crouched without moving, clutching a stone in either hand with the full intention of becoming aggressive if discovered. But as there was no indication that I had been either heard or seen, I crawled from the ditch, and, bent like an Indian, went silently and swiftly over the ground to where the back fence loomed through the darkness. I felt along the boards until I came to the gate. It was unlocked, and I was about to pass through when I thought it safer to scale the fence some distance away.

An eight-foot fence was nothing to a man of my activity, and though I was yet far below par physically I had no trouble in scaling it and dropping noiselessly to the grass on its farther side.

From there I slid like a shadow from tree to tree until I came to the edge of the road. This I crossed, and hid in the bushes on the other side. There were a number of houses in sight, the residences of the better class, but not in one did I see a light. I had hardly settled myself, certain that I had not been seen, when I heard the hour strike. It was ten o'clock. The street I was on was deserted of foot passers, but this was not remarkable, considering the hour and the rule of military law. But presently I heard footsteps coming

along the pavement — leisurely footsteps — and as I crouched behind the lilac-bush I used as a concealment, I saw a soldier with shouldered musket.

He was part of the patrol, I thought, and I was right; no soldier off duty would be lounging about with a musket. But he put a period to my hopes of following Louise, who was now due at any minute, for instead of proceeding on his way, the scarlet-coated man halted directly in front of the spot where I was hidden, and dropping the stock of his musket to the ground, pulled out a plug of tobacco and gnawed on it.

Here was a predicament for me, and it might prove one to the girl, as doubtless she would be stopped and be obliged to explain why she was on the street after dark without a pass. I quickly made up my mind to brain the sentry with the stone I still held rather than be caught, but it hardly came to that, for, as the soldier was pocketing his plug, he evidently heard some one coming. Quickly shouldering his musket, he stepped forward a pace, came to a stop, and brought his piece down to charge as he challenged:

“Halt! Who are you and where your pass?”

And then I heard a voice that made me crouch lower.

“My name is Dench,” said the newcomer. “I am a lawyer. That is my house yonder; I am going in at the back way.”

"You'll go in no way save you show your right to be here," was the soldier's answer. "Where's your pass?"

"Right here — right here," said the lawyer nervously as he fumbled through his pockets, but he failed to bring out the required paper. "I had it, sentry. I'll swear it is all right. I'm Lawyer Dench, Squire Thaddeus Dench, and —"

"I don't care who you are," was the soldier's return. "I want the bit o' paper or else you go with me to the provost."

"But I tell you —"

"You need tell me nothing, sir. I have my orders. Have you a pass?"

"I thought I had it. I procured it this morning from the city major."

"That may or may not be, but ye are a poor zany to be movin' around without it! In short, ye have no pass to show! Right about face, sir, and march. If you play any tricks with me you'll get badly pricked. Off with you."

"You'll pay for this outrage!" sputtered Dench. "I was given a pass for myself and servant. And I am in a desperate hurry. There is a man dying at my house, and —"

"No more palaver about it, old man," was the crisp return. "March on or I'll put the spur into ye."

There was nothing compromising about the tone of the soldier, and Dench, seeing protests were use-

less, turned, and went the way he came, the other, with his bayonet between the lawyer's shoulders, pressing him onward.

And thus, by a streak of vivid luck, was the way cleared of both sentry and an enemy. And hardly had soldier and prisoner gone fairly from sight, when I saw Louise. That the great figure by her side was Letty I had no doubt.

They came through the gate, reached the road, and after a moment of hesitation, took up their course southward. Had they been five minutes earlier, the sentry must have seen them. I was not then aware that so far as the sentry was concerned the girl cared nothing, her wit having provided for him.

I let the figures get fifty feet ahead of me before I followed; nor did I have to follow far before they stopped and waited. Her plan had not failed. In a moment I was at the girl's side, pouring out my thanks to her. It was the first time I had seen her in anything but man's attire, and in her present appearance I could by no means realize that here was the youth whom I had treated almost with contempt; that I had rescued one who had more than requited the slight service by saving my life.

Even in the gloom of the night I could make out the grace of her figure, and even then, too, I was alive to its charm — to the very charm of her presence, a thing I once cared nothing about. At

this time she was far less excited than was the black, who appeared to be on pins and needles — far less excited than was I, and she greeted me with a low word and a quiet hand-shake. I was glad it was too dark for her to take note of my appearance.

“I hardly think I have done you a favor by attaching myself to you at this time,” she said. “But we may both be safer together than apart. As you have come, Letty will go no further, as my pass provides for only two. You are to be my servant, and — hark!”

There was hardly need of the exclamation. Clear from the west came the rattle of musketry, but the nature of the sound showed the firing was at some distance beyond the Neck.

The rattling fusillade was followed by the boom of a single cannon.

“It is an attack!” I exclaimed.

“The better for us, as it will draw attention from the water-front. We are going there if we can, and I think there will be little danger. Letty has made arrangements. She has made our escape possible, having fixed matters with her brother, who will be waiting for us. It would have been a desperate undertaking for us only that at the last moment I stole Squire Dench’s pass. It is he who may have trouble.”

“Ay,” I returned. “He has struck it on his own threshold.” And then I told her what I had

seen and heard. “And doubtless I was the dying man he referred to,” I concluded.

“I know not,” she said, “but I have an awful story to tell you as soon as I have the opportunity. Do you wish your letters now? They are sewn in my skirt, but —”

“Nay, they are safer where they are. Let us get on, and do not be shocked when a light shows my appearance. I will follow behind, as a servant should.”

Our leave-taking from Letty was short on my part, though I was in no way lacking in appreciation for what she had done; on Louise’s it was fervid. She kissed the black woman, then tore herself away. The next moment the girl and I were alone on the street.

As we went along, she explained how she had gone from her room on that disastrous morning in time to see Brussel and Dench enter mine, and the drawn sword of the former had frightened her. She had witnessed the scuffle between the officer and myself, and just as I was conquering him, had seen Dench strike me down from behind, using a brass candlestick he had seized from the mantel.

The old man’s explanation for this act of violence had been too improbable for her to believe, though she knew next to nothing about me; and when the two men carried me down-stairs, I looking like one dead, I was lost to her until on questioning Letty she learned of my whereabouts.

Neither woman knew whether I was alive or dead, and it was Letty who made a guess at my condition, and took the risk of feeding me after finding out. It was she, too, who had planned our escape, and later made it possible. Well might the girl have kissed her, and yet I knew that it was her own winning personality that had captured the black. I expected to hear something regarding her own affairs, when we were stopped by a guard who demanded a pass.

I remained in the background, while Louise at once produced the paper with a fine air of impatience at having her progress interrupted. The man read the paper aloud:

"Permit Miss Dench and servant to pass through the streets of the city between the hours of sunset and sunrise."

I do not know who it was signed by, but the soldier folded up and returned it with a bow and a salute, which was lucky for him, as had he caviled at it, I would have felled him with the stone I still held to as a weapon, though I think my fist would have been enough.

Now whether the firing in the distance had anything to do with the matter, or whether it had not, I cannot say, but that was the only time we were stopped. Louise no longer talked, hurrying along, but at last she halted and turned to me. "I fear I have lost my way," she said. "Where is

Griffith’s Wharf — where the tea was thrown into the water? ”

“ Down the next street,” I whispered.

She hurried on faster than ever, and presently we stepped on the deserted and decaying structure that has become historical. On the wharf itself there was not a soul in sight. To the left, out in the bay, I could see the riding lights of the British fleet, and even make out the huge forms of two of the nearest ships. But they did not concern me. I was not so near absolute freedom that I could afford to look around and admire the beauty of the night and the harbor I knew so well.

It was now evident that the girl had been thorough in her planning, for as if she were aware of what she would find and where she would find it, she hurried over the quay until, at a point half-way to its end a man stepped from behind a mooring post and confronted her. I prepared to defend her, but she held up her hand and uttered one word in a low voice, at which the man — I now saw he was a negro — without a syllable in return, made off down the quay, with a motion for us to follow. Like a black shadow he moved, his bare feet making no noise on the planking.

I then knew that he had been looking for us, that he was Letty’s brother, and that Louise had given him an agreed-upon signal. I recognized the risk to him — to all of us — if some bulkhead

watchman or the patrol should blunder down the quay; but since the embargo, which had paralyzed commerce, there had been little need of watchmen along the warehouse-front.

However, it was a moment of stress. Not another word passed between any of us as we came together at the head of a ladder leading straight down and at the bottom of which was a dingey, or schooner's boat, swinging on the black water.

It may be wondered why there was no guard at this point, but the reason is plain. The immense gathering of men pressing close to Boston was thus far only menacing the Neck, and, as an army, was not recognized by Gage. At that time the doughty British general did not conceive of an organized war with the colonies as possible, and the martial law he imposed on the city was not to guard Boston from the effects of force, but to keep down the patriotic mob, and overawe citizens generally. The east- and south-side water-front was not menaced, nor was a menace thought of at that period, and as the British force was none too great, nearly every man had been drawn to the batteries or to the fortifications on the Neck.

There was no delay in getting into the boat, save for the awkwardness of descending the ladder for the girl, who, in skirts, made difficult work of it; but in a few minutes we were settled and the boat was away from the already tottering mass of decaying spiles, and out upon that pocket of water which,

with the Charles River on the north, pinches in the land and makes Boston the peninsula it is. I took a long breath then. "At last!" I said, bending to speak into the girl's ear.

"Thank Heaven!" she whispered. "I could never go through such an ordeal again. I thought I should die when the sentry stopped us."

"But how about Miss Dench?" I asked. "Who is she?"

"I am, for the nonce," she answered. "The pass was written for Mr. Dench. It was but the work of a moment to change the Mr. to Miss, but I was afraid of the trick being discovered."

"And seven days ago I had a contempt for what I called your weakness," I said.

"Ah, but you thought me a boy then!" she replied, and lapsed into silence. It certainly was no time nor place for conversation.

The muffled oars of the boat made little or no sound, and as the water between the shores is very shallow, there were no ships anchored near us. To the mainland of Dorchester it is perhaps three quarters of a mile, and when we had gone about half that distance my gratitude overflowed. I leaned forward toward the negro, who was tugging at the oars.

"My man, this night's work will be the making of a fortune for you and your sister. As soon as this trouble is over I will —"

"Hush, sah!" came his quick return. "Looks

like the trouble only just begun. I was afraid of this."

I was about to ask his meaning when my arm was caught by Louise, who sat at my side in the stern-sheets. At that moment I saw a boat shoot out from the shadow and make toward us, and at the same instant a hoarse voice came across the water:

"Boat ahoy! Cease way at once or I'll fire into you!"

I did not have to be told the situation. We had been discovered by a cursed patrol-boat, and matters bore a serious look, for the pass which was good on the street would be of no earthly use here.

Something like a groan came from the negro and he at once ceased rowing, though instead of sitting quietly and allowing us to bear the brunt of the coming interview, he looked at the fast-approaching guard-boat as if calculating its distance, then leaned toward me and spoke rapidly:

"If you have any regard fo' a service, sah, you will not say a word about me to them that's comin'. I have done mah best fo' you. Heaven give you luck, sah."

With this he slid himself over the gunwale and lowered himself into the water. A moment later I saw his black head disappear in the direction of Dorchester, he swimming easily and silently.

I was too astonished to speak to him, indeed I

had little to say. To Louise the negro's action came as a stimulant. She grasped my hand.

“Do as he did,” she whispered. “They will not harm me. Quick, take this. I would not have it found on me. It is the pass.”

As she spoke she thrust the paper into my hand, but I was too dumfounded to act, and the idea of deserting the girl was repugnant. I could not do it.

Nor, indeed, would I have had time to get away unnoticed, for the patrol was coming hand over fist, and I could now count the men in her — four at the oars and three sitting astern. In a moment they were alongside and a boat-hook fastened on to our gunwale, while a lantern which had been covered by a tarpaulin was held aloft by the officer in charge.

“What are you doing here?” he demanded, his eyes playing between the girl and myself.

“Going across,” I returned.

“That's obvious! Have you a pass?”

“I have,” I said, though I knew the paper would be worthless in our present case. Instead of demanding it, the officer peered closely at me.

“By Heaven, sir!” he exclaimed, “you look as if just from the shambles! Who are you?”

“That is nothing to the case,” I answered, now absolutely hopeless. “Take us where you wish, but I trust you will consider the lady. She

is the victim of private persecution, as am I, and I was helping her to escape. That is why we are here."

"Rather a romantic explanation," returned the officer, not ill-naturedly. "But I will take you in charge and look into your credentials later. Are you armed?"

"Not even with a penknife," I returned.

"Ay? Well, a man of your bulk would hardly need a weapon! From whom are you running?"

"It matters nothing now," I returned, thoroughly cast down. "I will explain later."

"Very good, my man!" he returned, and it was evident that the presence of the lady, who had not spoken a word, made him a trifle lenient toward me. At all events, despite my desperate appearance he seemed to consider me as harmless. He gave no order to search either of us, knowing we were at his mercy, and lowering the lantern, he spoke sharply to the Bowman:

"Sentor, jump aboard and make her fast to our stern. I'll tow them in."

The order was quickly obeyed, and then came the command to "give way," and in the wake of the patrol-cutter we moved out toward the British fleet, the man, Sentor, still in our boat. It was at this juncture of affairs that I very quietly dropped overboard the stone I had carried.

And now, with the certainty of destruction be-

fore me it occurred to me that I had been over-heroic, and something of a fool as well, not to have at once followed the negro. By remaining I had done the girl no service, and, indeed, when it should be discovered that her companion was Devil Darcy, her case would be rather prejudiced than otherwise. Now that she was out of the hands of Dench and in care of the authorities, she would be better conditioned, while I would be in a greater predicament than when in Dench's cellar. They hanged deserters.

These things went through my mind as we forged along, though I said nothing of them to the girl, whose hand I was now holding. I saw that her face looked white in the gloom, and her bosom rose and fell rapidly; but not a word did she say, not a sound did she make. Was she afraid for herself? I thought not. Nothing very serious could happen to her, and she might easily explain to her captors what she had not explained to me — the reason of her flight.

But as for myself, why should I trammel her by my unnecessary presence? She could tell enough of my story to justify herself. And each instant was carrying me nearer to destruction.

I made up my mind then to do a desperate thing, and with the sudden resolve came a quick tightening at my heart as I bent toward Louise and whispered:

"I am going to leave you. The risk is but

from a bullet fired in the dark. God bless you. May we meet again."

She turned her white face toward me, but I gave her no time to answer. In my sudden ecstasy I thrust the folded pass into my mouth, jumped to my feet, and cast myself into the water.

CHAPTER XII

THE BLACK WATER

THOUGH there was no moon, the night was starlit and the darkness over the bay not profound. As there was but little breeze to roughen the water, I knew that my head against the comparatively smooth surface would present a fair mark for a musket until I should get some distance from the boats, and therefore I was not foolish enough to rise and strike out for the Dorchester shore, which was now within easy swimming distance. That being the natural direction, I did not take it, though I had thrown myself into the water on that side, and knew that the patrol would look for me to make toward the nearest land.

I shall never forget the chill of the black water as I struck it, nor my sense of the narrow hold I had on life. I was like a gambler, desperate from his losses, taking a wild chance on a final throw of the dice though with tremendous odds against him. And yet, I knew that the single chance must be taken, and taken then, if at all. But my act had not been born of a blind impulse, and I had not left out of consideration the undoubted fact

that the officer would look upon it as the act of a man intent on self-destruction.

As my plan, seemingly due to no wit of mine, unfolded itself in a flash, as though sent from above, I saw its feasibility; and it was this that made me keep my brain steady as I went beneath the water.

Now, instead of making straight for the Dorchester shore, the heights of which had loomed black against the starlit sky, and which were to play such a decisive part in the future, I dived far below the surface, and turning, struck out under the boat, coming up, as I had hoped to do, close beneath her starboard quarter, easing myself to the surface without a splash.

God, how good was the first breath of air to my strained lungs! And now, instead of swimming away, I brought my head close beside the craft's flaring stern, and steadyng myself by a hand on an empty pintle-ring, awaited events. In whichever direction the patrol went I would go the opposite one.

Even by the time I reached the surface the painter holding the wherry had been cast off, and the shouts and confusion in the forward boat told me how unexpected had been my move. I heard the officer order his men to "cease way," and for a moment there was profound silence.

"What was that, Sendor?" finally sang out the officer.

"The man went overboard, sir," answered the fellow.

"Fell or jumped?"

"Jumped, sir, I take it."

"Fore God, he must have been a parlous villain! Whereaway is he?"

"Nowheres in sight, sir. He went over an' down, an' gave no warnin'!"

"What, man! Not see him! Where are your blasted eyes? You'll sweat for this! Look alive, boys! Half a crown for the first man marking him! Make ready to fire. I must have him dead or alive! Starboard, give way. Larboard, back water."

I heard the ominous clicking of two musket-locks, and knew by the order that the patrol-boat would swing off toward the Dorchester shore; indeed, I soon saw its shadowy bulk moving through the segment of a circle, the light from the now uncovered lantern glinting across the water. It was evident that the officer intended to be on the safe side and cut me off from the nearest land.

In a moment or two the patrol lay still on the water, every eye aboard her being strained to find me, but as I hung close against the black stern of the wherry, and was two hundred feet away, I could not be distinguished in the more than semi-darkness.

And now I saw that I had reasoned without taking into consideration a very important factor —

and that, the man called Sentor. Had it not been for him I would have struck out for the middle of the bay, as the matter of merely keeping afloat for an hour or two troubled me not the least, even in my comparatively weakened state. But I knew that such a move would be at once discovered by the sailor, and the alarm once given, I would be in a desperate situation, even were I not shot off-hand.

The girl was acting admirably. She had not screamed, nor did she break down; from her silence and the steadiness of the boat I gathered that she did not stir, and was far from guessing that she had fainted.

How long I hung in the stern of the wherry I do not know; it seemed for hours, though it was probably less than five minutes. The situation could not be indefinitely prolonged; and even if prudence told me to remain as I was my nerves forbade it.

I could stand the tension no longer; my business was to escape, and not hang there like a pickle in brine until the cold of the water rendered me helpless. And if the patrol-boat came back and rounded the stern of the wherry I was bound to be discovered.

I made up my mind to move before I became too numbed to do so; I would take a long breath, sink myself and swim under water as far as possible, trusting that the gloom would protect me

when I came to the surface, and I was already expanding my chest in a deep suspiration, when the man called Sentor brought matters to a sudden climax by clambering astern.

Before I fully realized in which direction he was moving, his head appeared over the gunwale. As he saw me, he let out a wild yell:

“I have him — I have him! Boat ahoy!” and with that he made a lunge for me and fastened firmly to my hair.

It was now or never with me, and there was but one thing to do. Drawing myself upward with one hand on the gunwale, with the other I grasped the man’s shirt, and then throwing myself backward, put all my weight on him. The move was unexpected.

In the unsteady craft the fellow lost his balance, and after wildly clawing at the gunwale in an effort to save himself, he plunged head first into the bay, but still with a grip on my hair.

Under ordinary circumstances, the sailor would have been a plaything for me, as in two seconds I was aware that he was unable to swim, but as it was the situation was a mighty serious one; for the fellow’s deathlike clutch on my hair dragged me with him, and together we went toward the bottom until my pent breath seemed about to burst my body. If ever a man was desperate I was then, and acting from pure instinct I planted my foot on the sailor’s stomach, and with a vio-

lent kick tore myself from his hold, leaving a bunch of hair in his hand with the feeling that I had been scalped. Ere the patrol-boat was fairly under way in response to his call I had come up again, this time on the starboard side of the dingey.

And now I knew that the game of hide-and-seek was up, and that inaction would no longer serve me; so, after taking two or three deep breaths, I struck out ere my head came within the radius of the lantern, and as quietly as possible made my way toward the black land. So, as God willed it, by the time the guard had rescued the half-dead Sentor I was well beyond easy ken from the cutter, and, having no desire to attract attention, I swam slowly, well aware that I would be pursued, and equally well aware that the chance of the cutter taking the right direction was fairly remote.

And so it was, for Fate held me in a kindly hand that night.

I saw the boat start again, but it went straight toward the shore, and as I was approaching land obliquely I was some distance from it. I changed my course then, turning and following the patrol's wake, and when finally it went east and along the edge of the land, I turned west. And so, after being some half an hour or more in water, which was none too warm at that season, I pulled myself up over the rocks of the steep, and stood panting

like a racer. Later I marked both boats take up their original course, but they were so far as to be but moving shadows. I breathed a blessing on Louise Selden, and turned toward the heights above me.

Now, at that moment, I had no idea whether or not I was on friendly soil. In my almost total ignorance of events I was only aware of the fact that the people had risen against the troops, and that Boston was besieged, though by what numbers and on what lines I had not the faintest conception.

But that Dorchester Heights should be guarded by my countrymen I felt certain, knowing what a vantage ground it was, and how it commanded the city. Hoping that at the top I would find myself among friends, I climbed the acclivity. At that time my only feeling of satisfaction rose from the fact that I had escaped the malignity of Dench, and had outwitted the equally dangerous arm of the British.

But my mission had been a dead failure; my letters were undelivered; indeed, it was now out of my power to deliver them, as, according to Louise, they were sewn in her garments. How she had learned of their importance was a profound mystery to me, for she had not found time to tell her story. I knew that Brussel must figure largely in the matter, and I cursed the man who had caused all my trouble, swearing between the

chills that now beset me that if ever I could again get within close range of the villain I would make him suffer as he had never suffered before.

Once on the heights I looked about in wonder. Not a guard — not a soul was in sight, not a sign of camp or fortification, and so, with a strange, uncertain twist in my head which I had never known before, and flashes of heat that drove off the chills only that they might gather strength, I went westward, as I afterward discovered, for I had lost the sense of direction and it was God's mercy alone that kept me from stumbling east and into the bay.

An hour later I knew — but only foggily — that I was a sick man. The wound on my head, captivity, insufficient food, sleeping in a damp cell, and at last, intense nervous strain and my long immersion in cold water, had been too much for even my strength. I was half-conscious of walking along a deserted highway, and for a while I thought that Louise Selden, dressed as a boy, was just ahead of me and ever beckoning me on. Later my weakened wits took flight entirely; the girl suddenly disappeared and there stood Dench, who also fled when I approached him. I met strange shapes in the dark and fought with strange enemies, with demons, with men, striking out right and left with my bared fists, hearing horrid sounds, and finally went whirling away through space, falling, falling, much as I had

seemed to fall when struck down in the lawyer's house. Then I remembered nothing. When I recovered consciousness it was to find myself in a room into which the sunshine streamed through a low window, and I was in a bed that was drawn close to the open sash.

Outside a small fire burned on the ground, a man with a gun on his shoulder passed and re-passed at regular intervals, and there drifted through the sound of pickaxes and shovels working in the earth. I turned in bed and looked around in childish wonder, letting out a groan equally childish. At my movement a man came from somewhere in the room, bending over me, and despite my weariness I recognized him at once.

It was Jacob Moon, whom I had last seen while he was dragging the unconscious sergeant from the coffee-room of the White Horse. His fine old face broadened as he saw my open eyes, and his voice was as gentle as a woman's as he said:

"Well, lad, it looks like ye had got safely through this neck o' the woods. Nay, nay, son," he continued, lifting his hand in protest as he saw I tried to speak, "I'll do the talkin' yet a while, an' I sense what ye would ask. First, ye be with friends; second, ye have been like a hen with a stroke in the head these ten days; an' third —"

He suddenly ceased speaking, and throwing

back his heavy gray hair, drew himself up in the attitude of "attention." I turned my head and saw that a man as square-set and powerful looking as Moon himself had come to the window and was looking in. I mind me he was dressed in a faded uniform with soiled yellow facings, and for a moment I thought him Moon's twin brother, the two looked so alike. Resting his folded arms comfortably on the sill, the stranger scanned my face for a moment, his sharp blue eyes roving quickly from point to point, then his face broke into a rugged smile as he said: "Ha! By the 'Mighty, but I'm glad to see ye be in the land o' the livin'! Likely to get on, Jacob?"

"I'm fain to think he'll now pull through, sir," said Moon, raising his knuckles to his forehead.

"Ay," was the return, "an' if I don't hang him for a spy or have him in the stocks for bowl-ing over my picket, I may need his sarvices. He's too sizable to be wasted! Get the lad to his feet as soon as may be, then bring him to me."

Then he pulled himself up and with a grim smile left the window as abruptly as he had ap-peared at it. I shifted my eyes to Moon's, and that astute person read my question, answering it in a subdued voice.

"It was Gineral Israel Putnam, lad; an' I take it that by the way he berated ye that ye be in luck."

I had heard of Putnam, "Old Put" of the

French War, as who had not, and was about to frame a question when Moon nipped it. "Not a word, son; not a word. I have my instructions. Later ye may palaver, but now sleep, if ye can."

And sleep I did, to wake and find a strange man in Moon's place, and it was many a day ere I saw the kindly old face again; for I was up and had gathered a measure of strength by the time he reappeared on my horizon.

And in the meantime I was held a prisoner. Not a close one; but as my full story was as yet unknown, and no one demanding it, I was still looked upon with a measure of suspicion, and was not allowed to leave the camp, which I learned was in Roxbury, its works facing Boston Neck and the fortifications through which I had passed with Louise Selden.

This state of things endured until the last of May, and then Moon, as suddenly as he had gone, put in his reappearance. Mighty glad was I to meet the old man again, and mighty surprised I was to learn from him that portion of my life unknown to myself. It seems that while in a state of delirium I had wandered along the Dorchester road until I struck the American picket-line. In the madness and strength of my fever I had attacked the single sentry, disarming him and nearly killing him before help arrived, and then I incontinently attacked the whole guard, which, tak-

ing me to be a lunatic at large, were about tumbling me into the bight of the bay when old Moon happened along and recognized me.

“And,” said he, “I saw ye had been through sore travail, sensing ye were a sick man an’ no bedlamite. So ye were brought into the lines, an’ I went to Old Put with as much of yer story as I knew. That saved ye from the lock-up, son, an’ the general ordered ye to be cared for like a Christian. There ye have it all at one b’lin’. What be you goin’ to do?”

“Go back home as a failure, likely,” I returned, being low enough. “It is about all that is now left for me, as Doctor Warren is out of the question at present.” And so I opened my heart to the old man, telling him of the girl, of Brussel and my fight with him, of my imprisonment and escape, and of my final adventure. He listened in wonder, and when I was through he brought his great hand down on his buckskinned thigh with a sound like a pistol-shot.

“Ye a failure! Heaven save us! An’ what might success be like? As for the letters—we were both blind; what they contain matters little at this stage, I take it, the fat bein’ in the fire an’ blazin’. As for Warren an’ studying for a leech, I opine it will be a fair long time ere he can give ye his attention.”

“’Tis that I fear,” I returned. “The thing has come strangely about. And I would like to

inquire what became of you the night we first met."

Moon smiled grimly. "When I left the bar of the White Horse," he said, "I meant to be back in a jiffy; but after draggin' that lump of a soldier to the cellar, where I dropped him to the floor, I heard others go into the bar an' so got myself into the kitchen, where I could see without bein' seen. I saw the neat way in which ye took the officer down, an' saw, too, ye needed no help o' mine. An' the sergeant found his way from below and came on the ground. When ye went I knew it was time for me to be off also, but I waited long enongh to hear about the comin' of the troops, an' as that was what I was there for, I sailed off to give Adams an' Hancock proper warning. It was them I stood guard for, so to speak; an' when Pitcairn looked for them in Lexington, I bein' head of him, they had gotten clean away. 'Twas a pity I thought nought about the letters."

"It was strange misfortune about them," I said. "And now they are sewn in a woman's clothing, and I know not her condition. I would I knew she was not suffering."

Moon clapped his hands. "A brave lady, that, lad; and one worthy of a man's mettle! Will ye now rest easy on the chance she is in no trouble?" asked the old man, sharply scanning my face.

"What do you mean?"

“ I mean that you are not needed here, my son, while yonder ye may be. Had I your years, an’ was there a woman who considered me as you have been considered, I would raise Heaven an’ Hell to get to her and fetch her from the coil she is doubtless in. Look now! There be twenty thousand men around Boston, an’ Gage is trembling in his boots for fear they will break in on him. An’ ‘tis likely they will as soon as the mob is organized an’ has a proper leader. What then? Why, the infernal regions would be a dead calm as compared with the state of the city then; and think of a helpless lady being there alone. Ye be young and strong, and — by the piper — ye go before Putnam this day. I had clean forgot my errand.”

CHAPTER XIII

UNCERTAINTY

I THINK I failed to at once completely grasp old Moon's meaning; and its drift was left unconsidered just then, for without delay we started for Putnam's headquarters. That doughty personage remembered me well enough, but there was little cordiality shown me even after he heard my story, he sitting in muddy boots and with little of a military air about him. All I gained from him was a joke regarding my size and present weakness, and a relief from even technical arrest. He even refused to consider me in the light of a recruit until I was more fit for service. I did not press the matter.

So I was in no shape to join the forces besieging Boston — a matter I had small taste for, being too impatient for duty in ranks. I had plenty of time to digest Jacob's words regarding the possible peril of Louise Selden, and it only increased my general discontent.

I was in sore straits at this time. I was without money, and without the strength to ride homeward, even had I a horse. My clothing was in a terrible state of shabbiness, and at last, to make matters worse, I was deprived of my only friend

in camp, as it was at this juncture that Moon was again ordered away somewhere, leaving me without a soul on whom to lean, though first he emptied his purse and divided his small store of coin with me. Then I bethought me of Able of the White Horse, and between short walks and various lifts, I managed to get to Menotomy; but the landlord could only promise me food and shelter until such time as I could pay him. As for my horse, that had been long gone.

So, after writing to my father, and sending the letter by way of Hartford, I settled down to wait for cash and returning strength, and was about as unhappy a non-combatant as existed within the lines.

Right here I pass over nearly a month of bodily inactivity and low spirits, though all the time my health was improving and my strength growing to its normal force. But I seemed to have no object in life, and felt like a coward as I lounged through the busy camps, holding little converse with any one. And these camps had grown smaller, for many of the besieging force had lost the spur of excitement and novelty and had gone to their homes. Had Gage known of the conditions he might have swept over the then feeble earthworks and scattered the but half-organized band that held him closely to Boston. But his late experience had evidently given him a wholesome fear of what he had called "the rabble,"

and he was further deceived by that old fox, Putnam, who, for his enemy's edification, would often take a single battalion of half-armed rustics, marching and countermarching them around a hill that was in full view from the Neck, until it appeared as if five thousand men were menacing that one point.

I might write reams of the existing demoralization of the American camp; of the shortage of powder; of the scarcity of arms; of the incipient mutinies, and the lack of discipline; but I will not, these matters not being germane to my story, though they might make interesting reading.

As for myself, despite the activity about me I grew to be morose. Though surrounded by a host I was alone, my soul grinding upon itself. I thought much of the girl I had left, and always with a restless feeling born of the fact that I was not doing my duty, nor could I exactly see in what direction my duty lay. I wondered where she was, and what her state. I wondered if I, for whom she had risked so much, had not been the cause of a great deal of suffering on her part, and for the simple reason that I had been in her company. I felt like an ingrate as I thought of her, knowing that save for her I would now probably be dead or in a military dungeon awaiting execution as a deserter.

At this time I would have gone into Boston, had it been possible, and would have willingly,

undergone great risk after getting there, but Boston was sealed against me and every one. I lost much time, too, thinking of Brussel, and the hatred for him that grew in me was an unholy thing. As for Dench — well, I hoped to have an interview with him some day.

And so, in useless repining together with equally useless wondering, and not having heard a word from home, the time passed.

It was the 16th day of June, and I was sitting under a tree in the yard of the White Horse, when a man rode in through the gate, and I saw he was Jacob Moon. Save for my father, I know not whom I had rather have seen. My spirits were at a low ebb, there then being little about me to justify my name of “Devil,” and I was wondering how I could down my cursed melancholy, when I recognized the old man. He leaped from his horse as if he were a man of but thirty instead of being nigh twice that, and came toward me, his hands outstretched, his broad face aglow.

“An’ I heard ye were hereabouts,” he said heartily, wringing my hand. “An’ I heard too, that ye were in the dumps, likely wi’ homesickness. God bless me! ‘Tis a thing I know nothing of, having no home — nor kith nor kin, for that matter. ‘Tis a fair shame for such a lump o’ flesh an’ blood as ye to be low in spirit! Well, I can wake ye, I fancy! I have great news!”

“From my father?” I asked eagerly.

"Nay, lad, I have not been in the direction of your father. But first, what be ye doin' these days?"

"Playing the part of a woman," I answered. "Twiddling my thumbs in weariness. I cannot see that it is my duty to join yonder mob. I cannot stand like a stake in a fence and go through the manual of arms. I want work — I want life, I want action. I have a mission in Boston, but know not how to get there."

"Not bein' a bird to fly to it? Ay, so! Well, a mole may go where a bird may not! However, son, I think I can put ye into the way of action ere long; an' mayhap the way to Boston will open up for ye."

"How?" I asked, for the man's manner told me more than his words.

"I know not that I should speak of it, seeing the powers that be are keepin' it quiet the while; but I will to thee, for ye can be trusted. And, moreover, I would like your company. Listen, son, but breathe no word of it. This night Prescott is ordered to Charlestown peninsula, and will there throw up a battery on the heights above the town — on Bunker's Hill. Such be the orders.

"Ye may know what that will mean when Gage catches sight o' the works. I shall happen there — by accident, like — and as a free-lance, son, as a free-lance. Be ye ripe to go with me? Who knows what may come of it?"

I became wide awake then. Here was a possible opening; in any event, it would be an adventure. But I would not appear to leap at the chance until I knew more.

"Jacob," said I, "you go here and there on short notice, and seem to know things that are beyond common guessing. Who and what are you? Is it a fair question?"

"Well, son," he said, with a slow smile, "ye might call me a sailor, or a soldier, or a farmer. I have been all three, for the last having seen service with Braddock. Now, I am on the road, as 'twere."

"A messenger?"

"Ye might so call it. I am at the orders of but a few, an', like the mole I spoke of, I do my work out of sight. Lad, I am like to enter Boston ere Gage gets out, an' that, too, without pass or word. D'ye see?"

"A spy! You a spy?" I exclaimed.

"Hush, lad!" he said, his face turning severe. "I am a man willing to serve his country in any way he can. Names count for nothing. Will ye go with me this night?"

"Ay, that I will," I assented, holding out my hand, while my spirits lightened at the prospect.
"Must I join the ranks?"

"Nay, if with me ye go as a free-lance."

"But I am unarmed!"

"An' without patience, too. I think that ye

will lack nothing of arms when the trouble begins. At first ye can dig, an' that's what will be wanted of us both. The rest remains to chance."

"Then command me."

"In only this. Be at the meeting of the Medford an' Charlestown roads this night by nine o'clock. I would cross the Neck ahead of Prescott an' his force. I cannot say what will happen to ye, but ye will be nearer the city there than here. You will not fail?"

"I will not fail."

"The Heaven be with ye. If ye have aught to say to your father leave the written word with Able, for it may chance that neither of us comes back." He climbed to his saddle as he spoke.

"Is it so desperate?" I asked.

He turned and pointed in the direction of Charlestown, his fine face becoming impressive in its expression. "Son," he said; "yonder is a bare hill cut with a few rail-fences an' marked by a few trees. 'Tis hot there to-day, under the sun, but if it be not hotter to-morrow, an' if the drone o' bees give not place to the hum o' bullets, never again trust Jacob Moon for a soothsayer. Desperate! Ay, 'twill be desperate. Does the idea balk ye from meetin' me?"

"It will not," I promptly answered. "I shall not shrink from where you are willing to go."

"I thought as much," he returned, with his close-lipped smile; and so, with a wave of his hand

he rode off. Surely, thought I, if I am called a devil on account of some college pranks and a foolish dependence on my strength, what might be a proper name for that old man?

I stood looking after him and I cannot say how my heart went out to him — how it still goes out to his memory.

CHAPTER XIV

ON BUNKER HILL

NOW, at that time I had no notion of accomplishing more than breaking what was fast becoming a settled melancholy. Certainly I was far from guessing that my inordinate appetite for adventure would be satisfied, and that I would soon meet those with whom I wished to reckon. I know from experience that it is well that the future is hidden, for had I been aware of what lay before me I would have quailed at it though always the right was on my side.

Up to that time, save for the clash on the 19th of June, there had been no fighting betwixt the troops and the people, unless some small skirmishing on the outlying islands over the cattle there could be called fighting.

But now a large, aggressive movement was to take place, and my common sense told me it was likely to result in a serious collision. And in my crazy spirit of adventure this fact lightened my heart. I did not think of danger to myself, or so little that I did not consider Moon's last words, and proceeded to the rendezvous without a line to my father or even telling Able where I was going.

To the army at large there had been given no hint of what was in the wind, nor did those below the highest officers know of what was toward when a body of over one thousand men, mostly of Connecticut, were ordered to parade on Cambridge Common that evening at six o'clock. By then I had walked into Cambridge on my way to meet Moon, and I guessed what was meant by the unusual array; ay, I was certain of it when, halting for a moment, I saw my old "prex," Langdon, of Harvard, stand up before them and lift his voice in prayer, his long white hair streaming in the wind. And it was with something of a feeling that a period had come to my useless days that I, with my hat off and head bowed, though I make no profession of being religious, echoed the old gentleman's fervent "Amen." I went my way with a lighter heart than I had known for many weeks.

It was striking nine in Charlestown when I came to the crossroads, the sound of bells drifting clear on the light breeze. From there I could see the causeway to the south, and beyond it the quiet British gunboats drawn so as to command the neck of land which, like Boston Neck, binds the Charlestown peninsula to the mainland.

There was nothing to alarm them; the land was still as night fell; nothing seemed to threaten; the vessels lay in the distance a dumb menace only, the soft purple of the sky bending over the scene.

I well remember that night; it was warm and fine, and the stars were very clear and seemed to have drawn close to the world — perhaps to witness the horrors of the coming day.

Jacob was before me at the rendezvous, though on foot, and was pacing restlessly back and forth. He appeared to have much on his mind, and wasted few words on me as we started for the heights, only explaining in a low voice that we were ahead of the digging force. We walked across the then unguarded Neck, going by the main road and not meeting a soul, but we soon left the highway and climbed the first hill looming before us. The long grass was ready to cut, and the dew lay heavy on it. By then it was deep darkness. At the top of the hill Moon stopped and looked around him.

"I do not fancy it," he said. "We would make a better showin' of our teeth if we cast up our works yonder instead of here on Bunker's meadow. And he pointed to a lower lift of land — a hill closer to Boston the lights of which were plain from where we stood. "Ay," he continued. "Why was it not considered? Breed's is some hundreds of feet nigher the land's end."

I saw that much myself, and was about to ask him a question when he caught me by the arm.

"Hist, lad! we were none too soon! Here they come, an' without having waked the lion!"

I turned and saw a body of men toiling up the

slope, and I marveled at the little sound they made; it was like a phalanx of ghosts, they moved so quietly. Ahead came two men, each with a dark lantern. We stood still until they were upon us, and then, as a light was flashed into my face, I heard an exclamation and a low alarm. The next moment we were pounced upon.

Well it was for me that Putnam would always push himself to the front of every movement whether ordered or not. He had no command on Bunker Hill that night, but he was there, as was Prescott, whom I now knew by sight. When we were brought before him Putnam recognized us both and had us set free.

I know little beyond that because I at once became identified with the force on the hill, and worked like a common soldier, though unattached to any organization. Nor can I tell how that night passed. I know that I found a spade in my hand and that I dug and dug, the perspiration pouring from me like rain. I had lost track of Moon and worked among strangers, but every man was a friend in those hours; and it was upon Breed's Hill instead of Bunker's that we toiled, though whether Moon's influence had aught to do with the change I cannot say. History gives the reasons; one may read it elsewhere than here; I am writing of that which concerned few save myself.

I think no body of men ever skinned the face of mother earth with more vigor and in greater silence than we did. It was astonishing how the bank of soil seemed to leap forward, and with what accuracy the lines were followed. Not a lantern was shown until the ditch was deep enough to shield the light. It was a time of suppressed excitement; the wind blew softly from the west, and the clear stars twinkled from a bed of dark-blue velvet.

The only sounds were an occasional low-spoken word of command, the click of stones, the plunge of picks and the dull thud of falling soil. Men spat on their hands, but spat quietly. Not a curse did I hear, nor was there more than a whisper among us. Once I straightened up to ease my back and looked at the sleeping city across the harbor and the town beneath us. In Charlestown not a light could be seen; in Boston a watch-fire burned on Copp's Hill, but that was all.

Was Louise in the town? Was she again in the power of Brussel? Very likely, as her identity was now doubtless known. And Dench?

“Curse Dench!” I exclaimed under my breath, and my hands clenched the spade. I could scarcely make out the ships in the bay, though the anchor lights showed their localities; but plainly through the silence I caught the words of the sentry on the one nearest, and his “All's well,”

came like music as it drifted upward. It made me laugh, and I fell to work with a vigor which now saddens me to think is lost forever.

I know not what time it was when I first saw Dr. Warren. I had met him many times while I was a student in Harvard, but I did not press my business on him at this time. He stood on the fast-growing embankment talking to Prescott, and he waved his arm toward Boston. I saw him later — shot down by —

But wait. It makes my blood boil when I recall that sight.

I think the Almighty blinded the British that night. It was long after I could plainly distinguish my companions' faces in the growing light before the enemy comprehended the fact that they had been outgeneraled by what they called an inconsequential mob.

The 17th of June is nigh the longest day of the year, and it was broad dawn when I first knew we were discovered. At about four o'clock there came the clapping report of a cannon, and as plainly as ever I heard a lark sing I heard the whistle of a round shot as it passed above us. The ball had been opened by H. M. sloop *Lively*.

I think every man stopped work for a moment, and many a face paled. But almost at once the tension of silence was broken by a long-drawn and defiant yell as a second shot tore through the air, screeching its threat as it flew.

An instant later Prescott had leaped to the top of the earthwork and was running along the parapet, shouting encouragement to those who hesitated in the face of the enemy's fire. So we fell to work again, though I noticed a few weak spirits throw down their tools and sneak away as soon as the officer was out of sight.

Of that morning I can tell but little, for the reason that memory does not serve me. I know that I wielded pickax and spade as if my life depended on it, as it doubtless did. I know that through all that hot forenoon the heavens rang with the crash of cannon, and later I became dimly conscious that Charlestown had been fired and was burning fiercely.

Hurrying men were all round me, and once I saw a dead body being carried by. The hill behind me was dotted with running figures, some going, some coming, and there, too, I again saw the ubiquitous Putnam, now on horseback, tearing hither and yon, careless of the flying round-shot, his voice bellowing orders above the crash of cannon. Around me laughter and curses mingled with the stroke of pick and roar of guns; but through it all we dug and dug, and not a shot was returned from the pile of raw, brown earth that protected us.

By noon I was worn out. Why I was where I was I hardly knew; but by subsequent events I have reason to believe that the hand of Fate had

led me to Breed's Hill, and kept me there until my hour should strike. And, unguessed by me, it was about striking.

I remember eating something at some time, but what it was and who gave it I have no idea. I think I was somewhere near the breaking-point, for the surrounding excitement made no impression on me. I must have worked in a waking dream, but I clearly remember the turning-point when I heard the order:

“Man the parapets! Throw down your tools and take up arms! Attention! Attention!”

Then, indeed, I came to my senses and looked about me with an eye of comprehension and wonder that so much had been accomplished in so short a time. The embankment was six feet high, and now it was lined with men peering over its top; they no longer held tools; each man held a firearm of some kind; all but myself. I remembered then that I was only a free-lance. If I fell in the coming muss not even my name would appear on any roll.

In the field back of the works and on Bunker Hill I saw a number gathered, and a body of men was hurrying to a long line of what I thought were earthworks to the east of us, though I afterward knew it was but a hay-stuffed fence.

Now I realized that the thunder of cannon had ceased, and in the comparative silence I plainly heard the crack and snap of the houses burning

in Charlestown. Those round me no longer cursed or laughed; a grim silence seemed to have fallen over the surging body which was lately so busy. It was like the lull that heralds a convulsion of nature.

I stepped on the banquette of the fort and brought my head above the parapet. On one side of me was an elderly man coolly pouring powder into his rifle's pan; on the other was a boy with a long fowling-piece, his eyes snapping from excitement, his red lips wet, and his cheeks were like roses.

Little wonder that he was fascinated by what he saw, for the sight might have stirred the blood of a dying man.

The British were coming. Already they had reached the first fence, over which they clambered, breaking their regular line. In front, to the right and to the left they were coming, a magnificent array of crimson, gold lace, flashing bayonets and waving banners.

This was war! I felt my pulses leap, and so engrossed in the spectacle was I that I forgot for the moment that I was in extreme danger and that I could not lift a finger to defend the fort from the oncoming enemy.

It was a great moment when they reformed and began to fire, still advancing as they loaded. In the enclosure I did not see a man fall, nor did I hear an answering shot. To all appearances the

British were having their own way, but they did not have it for long.

Down our line came the order: "Do not fire before the word," and it quelled the most nervous; but there grew a restlessness that was hard to curb.

Between the belligerents all was the picture of peace. On the deserted slope in front of us, up which the waving red line was toiling, the tall grass bent and sprung in the breeze and a few birds fluttered fearlessly. On Boston Heights a fine haze of smoke told of where the battery lay, and every ship in the bay had its veil. There was a wonderful attraction in the outlook, an attraction that grew to be fascination even to me as the serried lines swung forward. I had no business to be where I was, but I could not have left the spot.

On came the British, fence after fence melting away as they advanced, and as they drew near I could plainly hear the commands of the officers and file-closers.

Would the fort's defenders never fire? Would the command never come? In the peculiar state of things it appeared to me that our leaders had become paralyzed.

But there came no word at this time, and yet I could now hear the tread of the body of advancing men; I could also hear the band playing where it was stationed at Mulford's Point, and could almost catch the sound of metal against metal as

the last boats discharged the reserved corps on the beach.

On they came. Would the tension never end?

I dug my fingers into the earth. Oh, had I but possessed a gun! I could now plainly see each face, they were so near; and scanned the line, hoping for a sight of Brussel. Was he among the advancing lines? I hoped so, but why I could not have told.

Would the word never come?

They would be scaling the parapet in another moment.

I was ready to scream from sheer nervousness, and I might have done something foolish, only at that instant there came a single word that rang clear through the air:

“Fire!”

My ears sang under the crash of the explosion that followed. The red line ceased its regular movement and seemed to pitch forward like a falling wall. The front rank was nearly annihilated by the opening blast that broke from the crest of the hill, and ran along the line of the fence like a train of powder. Where there had been an orderly array of crimson ranks there was now dire confusion.

For volley followed volley, and, though for some minutes there was a return fire by the enemy, nothing made of flesh and blood could have long withstood the rain of lead pouring from the earth-

works. I was driven to the point of frenzy; and in the madness of excitement I cast a two pound stone at the enemy, and perhaps not without result, for they were within easy range of a strong arm. I forgot all danger to myself, being carried away by the lust of combat, and was picking up another stone to throw, when the youth at my side gave a sidelong lurch against me, nearly throwing me from my narrow foothold on the banquette.

I caught him in my arms, and saw by the dark spot in the center of his young forehead that he was past all help; he was dead ere he fell. Carrying him from the banquette, I laid him under the single tree in the enclosure, first stripping from him his powder-horn and bullet-pouch. The gun was still gripped in his stiffened fingers, and, loosening his grasp, I loaded the empty weapon and hurried back to the point I had left.

But before I arrived there there came a wild yell, and a slackening of fire told a story. When I looked over the parapet the enemy were in full retreat, some parts of the line being on a dead run down the hill. All was in disorder, the retreating body becoming a fleeing mob. Had we pursued then the battle of Bunker Hill might have been definitely settled at once.

Behind the retreating men the earth seemed to heave in agony; the ground was thickly covered by the dead and wounded, many of the latter roll-

ing in acute pain, and some trying to crawl down the hill. The erstwhile tall grass was flattened, and wherever one looked there was the débris of a defeated army. The loss within the fortification had been slight, but even now no man knows how many fell on either side in that first attack.

Behind the embankment men were shaking hands or embracing, while on nearly every face were tears of excitement; for we, the colonists of America, had learned one great lesson, a lesson we had partly known; that the disciplined British army was not invincible.

I longed to see old Jacob then, but he was nowhere in sight.

CHAPTER XV

AT CLOSE RANGE

THE respite gained by the first repulse of the enemy was a very short one; for hardly had the redcoats retreated beyond musket-range when the demoralized force was reformed and led to a second attack.

You know the result. You have read how they were hurled back with fearful loss, this time retreating clear to the beach.

The battle had got into my brain, and I loaded and fired, Heaven knows how many times, until I suddenly awoke to the fact that I had but one more charge of buckshot and barely enough powder to drive it fifty yards.

Neither by begging nor the promise of price could I obtain another grain; for every man I applied to told the same tale of shortage of powder and ball. And it struck me with a strange sense of coming disaster when I knew the little fort's defenders were well-nigh out of ammunition. No one had looked for a battle of this proportion.

I have no wish to go into the details of the day's

disaster; it makes unpleasant reading. But I knew disaster was at hand, as I saw the lines, re-enforced by the marines, re-forming on the beach, and I believe we all looked for what happened. One cannot fight without powder, and to make matters worse the ships shifted their positions that they might rake part of the works.

Again they came, but no longer squarely on our front. I know not how or when it happened, but ere I was aware of it we were beaten. I knew it when I saw the stream of red sweep over the embankment and leap into the fort; and I know, too, subsequent events proving it, that I had not discharged the last load in my gun; I probably considered it useless.

In the confusion that followed I saw a British soldier making for me with leveled bayonet, his teeth set, the perspiration streaming down his red face. I do not know what became of him, though a moment later I was aware that my gun's stock was badly broken and that I was as yet unhurt.

The scrimmage became general, and hopeless for us; men fought with stones, with clubbed muskets, with hands and feet and teeth; there was little firing, and little need of it for the enemy. We were already in full retreat — those who were free to go.

Somehow I found myself on the hill behind the fort and well away from it. Running men were all about me, and closing up with us were the vic-

torious enemy, not now in a regular line, but pursuing in groups.

I was out of breath and was walking, and it was at this time that I found I was near Dr. Warren. He was stepping backward, defending himself with a sword against the bayonet-thrusts of a soldier, and he was almost alone. As I started to run to his rescue I saw an officer come tearing up the incline, the hilt of his broken sword in one hand, a pistol in the other. I saw him stop and deliberately aim at Dr. Warren, but when he pulled the trigger there was but a flash in the pan. And then I recognized the man.

He was Larry Brussel.

The sight of him brought me to a halt; not from fear, but from sheer surprise, and at that instant came the final tragedy of Bunker Hill. As Brussel realized his pistol had missed fire he threw down the useless weapon with an oath, and, seizing a musket from the soldier at his side, he fired pointblank at the still retreating physician. Dr. Warren whirled around and fell on his face.

I seemed to awake from a trance and feel that every drop of blood in my body was in my head. At this inexcusable murder earth and sky turned red and I became irresponsible; though, even in that state, I did the right thing, and knew what I was doing, too.

As I sprang forward Brussel looked up from his victim, saw me coming, and recognized me. I

knew that by the start he gave. But, without giving him a chance to arm himself, I raised my undercharged weapon and fired at him.

The recoil of my piece, light though it was, proved sufficient to finish the usefulness of the stock, which had probably been shattered on the head of the redcoat who had attacked me in the fort; for with the discharge the wood broke short off and left me with but little more than the barrel in my hand.

As for Brussel, he could thank my lack of ammunition for his life that day. He did not fall, though that he was hit was plain enough. His left hand dropped the musket he was holding, and with his right he grasped his left shoulder and staggered back; at the same time a gush of blood ran down his face, where one of the buckshot struck, but had not the force to penetrate his forehead. In a second he recovered himself and his fury was like that of a wounded wild beast as he shouted: "Catch that villain. Let him not escape!"

Had there been but one or two to contend with I might have made an effort to fight my way from the field or even attack with the barrel of the fowling-piece I still held; but at that moment a squad of the British came running up, my way of retreat was cut off, and before I was hardly aware of the fact I was surrounded. Casting down the useless iron, I stood still and threw up my hands,

thus making myself an acknowledged prisoner, and to the man whom I knew would show me scant mercy.

Why he did not kill me then and there is a problem I have never been able to fathom. Perhaps it was that the murder of an unarmed and surrendered prisoner would not be tolerated even by his own fellows; but I rather think it is more probable that, having me at his disposal, he looked for a vengeance more satisfying than in leaving me dead on an honorable field. For I am now aware that he had in mind the pleasure of seeing me hanged or shot as a deserter, and of enjoying my presumed mental agony betwixt my sentence and its execution. I do not know his exact motive in then sparing me, but I am now perfectly aware that I played into Brussel's hands when, later in the day, I acknowledged to the provost marshal that I was a free-lance, unattached to any organization, and therefore, by military law, a free-booter, to be treated on land as a pirate is treated at sea. As a result I could not be looked upon as a prisoner of war subject to exchange.

All this I knew later; but I have only a hazy recollection of what immediately followed the murder of Dr. Warren, the shooting of Brussel, and my own surrender. I have a dim recollection of listening to a furious tirade from my old college-mate, and that it was cut short when he came close to fainting from shock and the drain of

blood. After that I lost sight of him for a time, he being assisted away, and I was marched down the hill to Moulton's Point and placed near though not with a number of other prisoners, not one of whom I knew. As a mark of especial attention, of which I was not proud, my hands were tied behind me, I being the only man thus treated.

I remember seeing the row of British dead gathered from the hill and laid on the beach, and even now I can hear the screams of the wounded as they were carried by me. I will give the devil his due and admit that none of the prisoners was abused at this time, although their hurts were not at once attended to, which was natural enough, the surgeons having their hands full in caring for their own.

No man wearing a red coat on Charlestown peninsula smiled that golden evening; the victory had been too expensive. Of the gallant band of untrained men who had that day defied England's power there were scarcely two hundred killed and captured; the rest had made good their escape across the Neck after having caused a loss to the enemy of over four to one. Every British soldier had a stunned and wondering look, as if it were already fully realized that the capture of a few more hills at the price paid for Breed's would decimate the British Army.

We prisoners were at last huddled in a bunch ranged about by a strong guard, and it was sunset

ere a movement was made to take us to Boston. I was then thinking that old Jacob had been right in a roundabout way when he said that I might get into Boston; but I had not looked forward to going in this manner. I wondered if the old man had been on the field during the fight, and how he had fared, when, like the crack of a pistol, I heard my name called.

“Allen Darcy. Step out.”

I looked up and with something of a start recognized the soldier calling me. He was none other than O’Hara, the sergeant I had defied at the White Horse, and that his call had something to do with his master, Captain Lawrence Brussel, did not take much brain exercise to render certain. Surely he could regard me with little more favor than did Brussel himself. There being nothing else to do I advanced toward him and was greeted much after the manner I looked for.

“Come with me, ye black-hearted dog!” he said, gripping me by the collar and swinging me in front of him. Had I been unbound I hardly think he would have touched me, but as it was, in my helpless condition he used a free hand and pushed me roughly along the beach until we came to a boat drawn up at a little stone pier. I then knew that matters were coming to a focus, for seated in the stern-sheets, with his hand bound up and his arm in a sling, was Brussel. On the thwarts were a couple of sailors with oars, and

near the officer sat a soldier armed with a musket. I wondered what was about to happen.

Was I to be thrown overboard in the middle of the bay? Undoubtedly, both Brussel and the sergeant were equal to getting rid of me that way, but for the presence of others it might have been done. However, I felt safer when, after I entered the boat, the sergeant following, there came another officer — a major, I think — and seated himself by Brussel. Then the boat put off.

I knew not what was in store for me in being thus distinguished from my fellows, and I seemed to care little, for I was weak from want of food, and had been without sleep for thirty-six hours; but to show an air of defiant carelessness regarding the future I commenced whistling a tune, and stuck to it until I was sternly commanded by the sergeant to cease.

After that for a time a profound silence reigned in the boat. I looked back. In the waning light from the west I could see that the British were already throwing up a work behind the patriot redoubt, or upon Bunker Hill itself.

It would be a gross lie for me to say that I was without anxiety; for I was really more than anxious about myself. It was strange — this solitary removal and being turned over to the two men who would have no consideration for me. Perhaps it was because my case was singular, for, without doubt, I was the only man unattached to

any organization who fought upon the hill that awful day. But I might discover my status and something of the future by questioning; anyhow, I would give my chief enemy to understand that I was aware his own skirts were far from being clean.

“There be plenty of hills between Boston and Cambridge,” I said, speaking for but not to Brussel; “and to capture a few more like yonder lift of land would cost the king a sight more subjects than he could command.”

The major stared at me; Brussel scowled, but said nothing. Gaining little by this, I changed my tactics.

“Am I a prisoner of war?” I asked.

“You are a deserter,” burst out Brussel.

“Ah! Which means—”

“That you will be tried before a proper court and be properly shot,” he returned quickly.

“And when?” I asked, as if it were immaterial to me, though my heart began to beat quickly.

“None too soon for my pleasure and your deserts. Cease talking,” he returned.

“A drumhead court probably,” I said, ignoring his command and finding myself in a position to goad him. “Well, Heaven grant you be there as a witness, and also Colonel Dalrymple. I have some information for him that would be more sur-

prising than welcome, and in about the same measure as it will be distasteful to you."

It was becoming too dark to clearly see the man's face, but I felt the baleful look of his eyes. He whispered a word in the major's ear, and the sergeant bent toward me and hissed:

"Hold yer jaw, ye rebel, or I'll open ye with this bayonet!"

I concluded I had said enough. I might make Brussel writhe, but I could not harm the soldier; yet I ventured one more shot.

"I am a prisoner of war and no deserter," I returned stoutly and for the benefit of the senior officer, who had thus far remained silent, "and if Captain Brussel treats me unfairly before any court it will be to his own undoing."

Nor did this provoke a return, though I felt that my words had struck home; and if my enemy had before held a doubt of what I had overheard the day he had surprised me listening at his uncle's door, I knew he doubted no longer.

Somehow I did not feel hopeless, though I did feel helpless, and thereafter held my peace. It was not many more minutes ere we were in Boston, landing at Hancock's Pier; and there both Brussel and the major disappeared in the dark, leaving me with the sergeant and the other soldier.

Then I knew why we had landed where we did. It was because of its nearness to the common jail,

for into it I was unceremoniously thrust. I was alone, and alone I remained for more than ten days, poorly fed, with no companion, and with only that knowledge of the outside world that filtered through the soldier who served me. He was a garrulous chap, and from him I learned that things were not going well, and that the prisoners were to be shipped over-sea for trial in England as traitors to the king. It was not admitted that war existed, the guard told me; but he gave me a list of those who had fallen, or died from the effects of the hillside fight. I was astonished at the havoc in the ranks of the British.

I learned, too, that Brussel was absent on sick-leave, but the good-natured private could not say where he had gone. The army had settled down to await reënforcements from abroad before continuing operations, he said, and there was a shortage of supplies. That was all I learned then.

On the evening of the eleventh day I was called for, and stepping from my cell, I found myself face to face with my old opponent, Sergeant O'Hara. What was coming now? I asked him the question, but without replying he handcuffed me and dragged me from the cell and into the street where he commanded me to walk ahead of him. It was almost dark by then.

I thought it strange that if I were at last being taken to trial, it should be held at this hour, and I mentally ran over the story I should tell of

Brussel. For myself I had little or no hope, knowing what courts-martial usually meant, but the trial before me was not of the nature I looked for.

We walked rapidly along the deserted waterfront until we came to a huge warehouse, which had once been in the center of a business now dead. It was abandoned save for two or three soldiers loitering around what had been the office door. They eyed me with curiosity, nodding at my guard, as we passed in.

Here had been the counting-room, but now little there was to suggest its past use save the broken and dusty desk against the wall; it was evidently used for a lounging-place for troops. My idea that I was being taken to a court for trial was soon dissipated, for my guide pushed me through this room and into a passage; and by what I saw as I passed an open door I knew the place, or part of it, had been transformed into a temporary barracks.

On through the passage and through several immense rooms, up a flight of stairs, through another barnlike expanse of empty rooms once filled with goods and up a second flight, and then the sergeant halted in front of a door, took a key from his pocket, unlocked it, freed my wrists of their irons, and, giving me a violent push, sent me sprawling into the black space of the room. At the crash of my body to the floor there came from somewhere the clank of a chain and a long-drawn,

deep-mouthing sound like the yawn of a wild animal.

The door was at once locked on me, and I could hear the man outside striking a flint and steel. In a moment the door opened and a lighted candle was set on the floor as the sergeant stepped into the room.

Unslinging the haversack from his shoulder, he threw it at me, but it missed me and went sliding over the boards.

“Hi, there! Lucifer, ye beast!” said the man. “Watch it — watch it, ye fiend!”

With that he went out again, closing and locking the door behind him.

PART TWO

CHAPTER XVI

THE HOUND

ALL this happened so suddenly that I had no time to take note of my surroundings until he had gone, and then I got to my feet and looked around.

As the shaken flame of the candle steadied in the still air of the now quiet room I saw that I was in a perfectly barren apartment, close, un-ventilated, and evil-smelling, a room which might have been ten by fourteen feet, in the far end of which was a closed window thick with dust, this window being set in a rough door let into an arch of brickwork.

Extending for half the length of the room and stayed to the hewn rafters of the ceiling by iron stirrups was a great beam some eight or ten feet from the floor, and I knew that its outer end extended beyond the building; in short, it was a hoisting beam through which with a tackle and fall goods were raised and lowered to and from the different floors of the warehouse.

But it was neither the size of the room, nor the

window, nor yet the beam which first caught my attention and soon brought me to a realization of man's inhumanity to man. Truly, though I saw these things, I saw enough else to wonder at; for stayed by a chain which was fastened to a staple driven into the worn casing of the arch was an immense hound, gaunt and red-eyed. On the floor round him were a number of cleanly gnawed bones.

I do not know the animal's breed, but he was short-haired, striped in fine gray, and his immense jowls hung loose under small ears; he must have weighed close to seventy-five pounds, and it did not take me many minutes to discover his temper. Why he was there I might only guess, and my guess was that the brute had been relegated to this out-of-the-way spot because of military regulations against animals in barracks. Chained as he was I had no fear of him.

He got slowly to his four feet and looked at me, his eyes winking sleepily; then the scent of something evidently came to him, and he stepped to what I now saw was the haversack the sergeant had thrown at me, and which had fallen within the bounds of the dog's leash. He nosed the heavy canvas bag, turning it over and over; then settled down with it between his paws, the extended shoulder-strap laying well away from him and toward me.

Now, I was not in the least averse to having a

dog for a companion, but I had no notion of letting him monopolize food I was greatly in need of; indeed, it was imperative that I should have it; and so, with no feeling of enmity toward the animal, I reached for the strap when like a flash the brute was on his feet, and, letting out a fiendish howl, he sprang for me.

It was fortunate for me that he was near the length of his leash as he sprang, for I had barely time to shrink back when his forefeet struck me, knocking me over; the chain then, tightening on the wide leather collar, jerked the animal to his back; but in a twinkling he was on his feet and facing me, his eyes now blazing and every smooth white tooth showing in a fiendish grin.

I was stricken with horror. If the hound was not rabid, he was worse, for a rabid animal has no intelligence to guide him, attacking blindly; here, however, was an open and alert enemy.

And now I saw the sinister intention of the sergeant in not only housing me with this brute, but in throwing the haversack within the radius of his chain and telling him to watch it. I saw more than this. To me there clearly opened the plot to get rid of me.

So, I was no deserter to be tried by a court-martial, but a victim of private hate. I might have known that Brussel would not dare have me tried; but how he had obtained permission to remove me to this place I do not know, nor have

I ever been able to discover. It was probably through an understanding with Loring, the commissioner of prisoners, who had charge of all captured men. Betwixt him and Crean Bush the beleagured city of Boston suffered more than it had any need — and Gage well knew them both. It were easy for Loring to prick a man on his list as being dead, and then pass him to the tender mercy of any who would pay for the privilege. To me it was now certain that I had been placed where I was for the purpose of being mangled by an uncontrollable fiend in the shape of a hound, and when at last my remains were discovered the whole matter would be looked on as — perhaps an accident; and the brain that could conceive such a plot might easily conceive an excuse.

All this flavored of Brussel; his name was written large, and it was in line with his previous effort to dispose of me. The man was a coward — a black-hearted coward without nerve enough to strike openly, and the sergeant, undoubtedly one of the officer's own ilk, was ready enough to obey a hint as well as an order.

Was this the hound I heard referred to while I had listened at Dench's door? I had no doubt of it; its name, "Lucifer," almost identified its owner.

Now I set myself against the wall and returned the dog's glare by a steady look as I calculated my chances. They appeared slim enough, if I did

not obtain the haversack, and as slim if I made any further effort to get it away from the hound; he was held by a chain six or eight feet in length, while the haversack lay within two feet of its limit.

That haversack I must have. How was I to get it? Certainly the brain of man against that of a brute would be equal to the solution of such a problem.

The solution came to me as my eye fell on the already guttering candle, which would last barely twenty minutes longer, it being but an end when set on the floor. I acted at once.

Getting down on all fours, I pushed the candle ahead of me, moving slowly toward the waiting beast, which, at my first stir, bounded from one side of the room to the other, snarling like a demon, then sprang at me only to be brought up short and thrown on his back.

Instantly he repeated the leap with like result, but as inch by inch I made toward him he no longer sprang, but stood with legs apart and jaws open straining at his chain and giving voice to short, choking barks.

As I neared him I felt his equal in brutality. My excitement was intense, the hair on my head seemed to stiffen, and had I his fangs I would have thrown myself on him then and there. The intensity of the game I was playing made me forget all else for the moment — all else but its ob-

ject. I must have food; for food men stake their lives and do murder.

Lunge after lunge the dog made as very slowly I neared him, and futility changed him to a demon. His great jaws snapped like a steel trap, his hair bristled, his eyes shot fire; he was the incarnation of impotent fury as he let out a bark that grew to a roar.

At last, as I came close, then not being more than two feet from him, at which distance I could feel his blasting breath, then, I say, he stood still, as I figured on his doing, straining at his chain. This was what I wanted; a knowledge of the exact limit of his leash, and that being now determined, I went on. Bending my face as close to that of the maddened brute as I dared, I filled my lungs and let out an answering roar that must have surprised him; at the same instant I thrust the lighted candle into his gaping mouth.

The plan worked.

Between my voice and the flame the astonished animal leaped back, his roar changed to a quick yelp as the fire bit into his flesh, and before he could recover himself I had reached for and seized the strap of the haversack and regained my position beyond the line of danger.

But now I was in utter darkness, the candle being extinguished; and the din raised by the maddened animal was bewildering. I felt shaken by the racket on top of my experience, though not to

the extent that prevented my doing full justice to the ration. It was plain enough and there was none too much of it, but I felt wonderfully strengthened, albeit I was thirsty.

If the noise made by the hound was heard by others it had no effect of which I was conscious. No one came near me, and I had reason to believe that the sergeant would see to it that no one should come.

It was not until I had finished eating and lay down on the boards, that the brute ceased to give voice. So long as I remained perfectly quiet he did the same, but at my slightest move there came a deep-throated, menacing growl, and if I sat up, as I once did, the cursed hound roared a protest and tried to get at me. Twice I heard an ominous crack of the wood to which he was fastened. If it should give way under the continued strain I were a doomed man.

I lay quiet and finally slept, worn out with fatigue, and when I awoke day was dawning. Now I could see beyond the window, and marked the iron hook on the end of the beam as it stood against the pale blue of the sky.

I sat up, and with my movement the hound again leaped for me with mighty force; and then, to my consternation, I saw that the unusual strain had loosened the worn casing and part of it had been pulled an inch or two from the brickwork. As I marked it it bulged frightfully, and I saw

that but a little greater force, or the same longer continued, would tear the casing completely away.

As I realized this the perspiration started from my every pore. It was not death itself I feared, but the threatened manner of it was abhorrent. And it would be a triumph for Brussel. I could see the grin on his face when he learned he had been relieved of me — by an accident.

And the girl?

The thought of her steadied me, and within me there came a quick longing to see her if only to explain my seeming neglect of her. What this thought of her meant to me I was too great a fool to understand, nor was I in an analytical mood at that time. The present absorbed me.

How could I escape this new peril? In the room there was but one spot beyond the dog's reach, once he was free, and that — the beam above my head. I looked up at it. It was well beyond my grasp, even at a jump, though could I but get my fingers over its edge I might soon swarm into the two feet of space between it and the roof. There would be safety for a time.

The solution of the difficulty came to me as readily as the way to obtain the haversack, and that was through the haversack itself. It took me but a moment to unbuckle the strap, which was stout and could have held the weight of four men; then I threw it over the beam and rebuckled it. Here, then, was a sling which would serve me, and in a

moment more I was up and lying along the length of the great stick, it being fourteen or fifteen inches wide, while the infuriated beast roared like a devil in pain as he saw me perched above him. I laughed then, but it was not the laughter of mirth or pleasure.

Working myself along the beam until I came to the window I looked out. The view opened over a court surrounded by the building in which I was confined. As I had suspected, I was on the top floor, and a single glance told me that even were I free of the menace of the hound I could not escape by way of the window. There was no rope pendent from the hook, and the stone-paved yard was at least forty feet below.

It was then about half-past four o'clock, as I figured. Above the adjoining roofs I caught a glimpse of the far reaches of the bay, pearly in the growing light. The sight set me wild for freedom, and wilder when I considered that not a soul save my enemies knew of my condition or whereabouts, and perhaps never would know.

I was safe for a time, but for how long a time? Must I lie on a narrow beam (for the dog would soon tear himself loose) until hunger compelled me to gnaw the leather of the strap or thirst drive me to delirium? It was a hopeless outlook, and in my despair I brought my hand to my head.

The movement had dislodged the haversack I had drawn up after me, and it fell from the beam;

but before it reached the floor I had caught the end of the strap and for an instant the bag hung swinging near the hound.

As I drew it up the devil flew for it, just missing it, but his projected weight was too much for the weakened woodwork; the length of the casing tore away with a ripping crash, and the hound, now only fettered by the long stick, leaped into the air in frantic efforts to reach me.

But I soon discovered that by remaining perfectly quiet the beast would be less violent, only sitting on his haunches and eying me with an inflamed look and giving voice to deep-chested growls; and, therefore, to save my nerves I moved no more than was necessary to fill and light my pipe, for of the smoker's outfit I had not been rifled, and tobacco is a solace for the man of clean conscience, be his condition what it may.

As I smoked I thought, and even thought of escape. Ay, treed though I was, and apparently without a chance, my wits dwelt on possibilities. If the cursed demon of a hound were out of the way I might —

Ha! I had it — possibly! It were well worth the experiment, and should it fail I would be none the worse off. If the menacing animal had the temper and tenacity of purpose of the bulldog he resembled in all but size the idea that leaped to my brain might enable me to be rid of the monster.

After that perhaps the Almighty would further direct me.

I put the matter to the test at once. Passing one end of the strap of the haversack around the beam I buckled it firmly and in such a way as to permit the heavy brown canvas bag to hang free when I should be ready to drop it.

With my first move the animal awoke into his old fury, and standing directly beneath me, howled out an invitation to come down, his red throat and open jaws dripping thick froth. I cursed the vicious brute roundly, and when his rage was at its height I dropped the bag.

As if the canvas were a part of my own body the beast flew at it, his jaws closing on the stout fabric with more than a vicious snap. Its height from the floor brought the animal to his hind legs, but he jerked at the haversack and shook the thing until I feared that the strap would give way. Thank God, it did not.

I pulled at it, screaming and snarling that I might further madden the brute, and then, when I had wrought his anger to a pitch that made him a fearful object even to look at, I locked my legs fast around the beam and reaching down as far as possible, grasped the strap a foot above the animal's gleaming teeth, and fairly lifted him from the floor.

As his full weight came upon his jaws I feared that he would either loosen his grip or that the can-

vas would tear from his hold; but neither happened, the canvas being new and heavy, and as for his jaws, I doubt if they could have been pried apart with an iron bar. He held on.

I put all my muscle to him then, though in my position it was an awful tug to draw him higher. Inch by inch I hauled him, clamping the slack of the strap round the beam, while the brute, true to his stubborn breed, held his jaws like a vise. Soon I was able to reach down past his fearsome head and grasp the chain.

Then I knew I would be successful and that the end was at hand. Still holding him with the clamped strap in my left hand I wound the chain around the beam, and when I felt it was secure I let the strap go.

The result was what I had looked for; the jerk of the heavy body tore the animal's teeth through the haversack, and he was swinging by his stout brass-studded collar. If that did not give way he would soon choke to death.

His struggles were now fearful. The beam, stout as it was, trembled under his violent convulsions. I thought something would surely part and free him, but the collar was strong and its grip on the brawny throat shut off the brute's voice and breath, and in a few minutes his frantic struggles began to grow less, though it was probably ten minutes ere he ceased to kick, and hung a limp length, his hind legs almost touching the floor.

The fluttering sigh I gave was a prayer, if ever there was one, a prayer of thankfulness, though I did not see how I had advanced myself save to have room in which to move.

I worked myself again to the window with the intention of kicking out the glass to obtain much-needed ventilation, and had raised my foot when I saw a soldier come from the opposite archway and cross the court toward that portion of the building where I was confined. I did not have to guess at his identity. He was the sergeant, dressed as if for a march, from knapsack to musket. He looked up at my window as he walked, but the dirty panes prevented his seeing me, and he passed on as if in a hurry.

Then the thought came to me that he was coming to investigate my condition, and I knew, too, what could be the result of his discovery. My heart gave a prodigious bound, and at that moment I became more dangerous than an unthinking hound, be its disposition what it might.

The man was alone, and being alone I knew that the supreme moment of my life was at hand. He would soon be with me, and when he entered that room I would leave it before him or die attempting it.

With that determination I dropped to the floor.

CHAPTER XVII

THE PASSING OF O'HARA

MY plan, though decidedly desperate, was as natural and simple as it was lacking in originality. It was to secure that portion of the casing which had been torn away by the hound, and was still attached to his chain, and using it as a club, attack the sergeant when he entered the room. As he believed me to be unarmed he would not have provided against surprise.

But at the very beginning of my efforts I saw how futile had been my hope of obtaining the stick as a weapon; for, in the first place, I could not free it from the chain; in the second, it was too long to be used effectively; and, in the third, it being either of oak or ash, I could not shorten it by breaking off a sufficient length.

I know I worked feverishly over it, trying to rend it across my knee; but the tough wood resisted my every effort, and I was in a desperate state as I heard the heavy-footed soldier ascending the stairs. In ten seconds he would be at the door, he would unlock it, and, seeing the situation,

either proceed to make short work of me with his musket or lock me in until his brain could devise some other scheme to get rid of me.

But there was no question as to what lay with me to do. Armed or unarmed, when he entered the room I must close with him and take all chances. My fear was that he would open the door but far enough for a tentative look, and seeing me alive would immediately close it. His footsteps were already advancing along the hall while I was still trying to break the stick; ay, before I desisted I heard him place the key in the lock, and with a feeling of something like despair I softly laid down the useless wood and as softly sprang to the door just as the rusty wards grated.

With the intuitive desire to get a moment in which to think, I placed my foot against the lower panel of the door that it might not open easily. That it swung inward was providential for me.

My sole idea was to resist pressure from the outside until the sergeant should become impatient or would wonder what had happened within. In either case he would exert himself to push open the door, and when he should have put sufficient weight against it I would suddenly remove my ⁴ foot. I hoped the result would be that he would bolt into the room with more or less precipitation.

For the rest my skill as a wrestler would have to serve me.

When a man is in as precarious a situation as I

was, if he be normal, his every sense is quickened and his brain works with unusual speed. As I placed my heavy shoe against the door I had outlined what I hoped to do, and, if my wits did not become paralyzed, I had reason to think I had a chance to win.

And, too, I had reason to think that my place of imprisonment was unknown to many, perhaps to any save the sergeant and Brussel, for surely the motive which had resulted in my being placed within reach of a savage dog would not be bruited abroad.

Therefore, the sergeant would not depend upon the help of another, even though he became suspicious of the condition of things within the room; and it was this certainty which gave me confidence. He would be alone, and I would have but a single man with whom to deal; certainly no one was with him when he crossed the court, and in the hall I heard no step but his. I had been careful to make no noise, and if my silence should cause the man outside to think me dead, so much the better; he would be less guarded in his movements.

And it was evident that some such matter crossed his brain, as he no sooner tried the door after unlocking it, than, finding his entry blocked by some obstruction, he knocked on the thick panel, at first softly, then louder as he called my name.

In the meantime I was stripping off my coat and rolling up my ragged shirt-sleeves. My intensity,

or tension, was great; indeed, at that moment, was so great that the sensation of fear was lost, and later I found I had set my teeth into my lip until it bled.

As a profound silence was the only answer to his knocking and the call of my name, the sergeant shook the door, then I heard him mutter something as he gave it a hard push. The door still resisting, he set his musket against the wall, for as plainly as if it were within the room I heard the bang of the stock on the floor; then the man put his weight against the panels.

The upper portion of the door sprung under the pressure, but the bottom still hung, held fast by the brace of my foot. To him it was evident that something, probably my dead body, lay against the door, for with an outspoken imprecation the man set his shoulder against it and heaved.

I could not have held against him if I had wished to, and as I felt my heel slip I knew the decisive moment had arrived. Quickly withdrawing my foot, I jumped aside.

The result was all I could have wished. As though shot from a catapult the man plunged into the room, losing his balance and almost going to the floor, the door crashing against the wall, and before he could recover himself I was upon him. Catching him from the side and just beneath his heavy knapsack, I twisted my leg round his and brought him to the floor with a bang that shook

the old beams beneath it; the next moment I was astride of his body as I had once been astride of his master, Brussel, and now there was no one to interfere with me.

The sergeant had given one quick cry as I wound my arms round him, but that was all; before he could have a realizing sense of the conditions within the room I had him down, had his head bent backward over the roll topping his knapsack, and, with my two hands gripping his throat, had shut off his wind.

Had he not been handicapped by his knapsack the contest would have been a harder one for me; but the great bulk on his back not only trammelled him, but it made a point over which to bend his thick neck, and, throwing my weight on him, I forced his head back against the floor.

Heavens, how he struggled! Despite the treatment received from him, despite his heartlessness, I had to stifle my own sense of pity for the fellow as he writhed in physical and perhaps mental agony. How he grasped my wrists and tried to tear me from my hold! His great legs thrashed the floor, his body contorting in his efforts to unseat me, and had I been in less peril he might have freed himself.

But I was fighting for my life, and was strengthened by the sense of my wrongs. I drove pity from me, sending it to the winds in the curse I gave the fellow under me. My hands were like iron,

my wrists were steel bolts, and, no matter how he twisted and thrashed, my knees bit into his sides and I held my place astride of him.

It was not until his light-blue eyes were fairly starting from his head that he gave over struggling and threw up his hands in token of surrender; but I could not afford to be generous. Though I had no intention of killing him, I did not dare reduce the pressure. What would his surrender mean to me? Nothing but a continuance of my peril. If I locked him in the room ere I had rendered him entirely helpless it would be but a few moments before he would have the window smashed and his voice bellowing an alarm. Nay, I dared not let him go.

With the falling of his arms his tense muscles relaxed and his face grew dark with settled blood, and then I knew he was too far gone or even to help himself for a time, and so I let go my hold and got from his body. He was not dead, for his chest still heaved; but he was totally unconscious, though how long he would remain so I had no idea, and my ignorance hurried my movements. If he was to recover it was certain that I could not leave the man lying where he was and hope for much time in which to escape. That he would be searched for sooner or later I knew, and that ultimately he would be discovered I was also aware; but by then I hoped to be in some safer place than the heart of Boston. All I could now do was to

delay his rescue, and as I stood looking down on him an easy way presented itself.

Quickly climbing to the beam, I unwound the chain and lowered the dead hound to the floor, then with the strap of the haversack I bound the unconscious man's hands, after which I dragged the dog close to the sergeant's body and wrapped the chain about hound and man, fastening the links by locking them with the stick. Thus the two were held close together, and when the soldier recovered he would find himself so bound to the dead brute as to be helpless to more than move. For the time taken and the means at hand my work was very complete.

After that I had no preparations to make. Without a regret for what I had done I went into the hall, locking the door behind me and taking the key, which I afterward threw down a well.

The sergeant's musket stood where he had placed it, and, though I looked at it enviously, I knew its possession would be a source of danger; therefore, I only unfixed the bayonet and hid the bright steel in my sleeve, leaving the firearm where it was. Then I went down-stairs.

While I remained in the upper part of the great building I felt safe enough; for in many of the empty rooms, as I soon discovered, no human being had set foot since shortly after the embargo was declared, the dust-covered and untracked floors showing how deserted they were. Every

bale, barrel and box had long since been removed; the rooms were empty of everything save dust and flies.

There were several reasons why I could not remain hidden in the old warehouse, be it ever so safe a refuge, and one reason was enough: I must have food and drink, especially the latter, as I was wild with thirst.

But there was no question with me as to where to go; I knew my destination well enough; it was Dench's house. There I would obtain food and drink, and there I would take command of the man whose treacherous blow had floated me on a sea of trouble.

Nor was that all, for possibly Louise Selden had been returned to him; and, too, it was even possible that Larry Hotfoot was with his uncle. So I possessed every incentive to go back to the scene of my first misfortune, and was in fair shape to make the passage, for I was desperate from lack of nourishment, desperate from suffering, and desperately intent on what most men would call revenge, but which I called punishment.

And my way seemed so smooth that it argued good fortune for the future; for by the sheerest accident I stumbled on a flight of stairs which led me to the rear of the building instead of the front, and there I came upon an unlocked door which opened upon a deserted alley, which alley debouched into a back street. It was eight o'clock

by then, and I stepped into the early sunshine with that appreciation of freedom which only the lately imprisoned can realize. Hardly more than an hour before I had been well-nigh hopeless; since then I had passed through deep waters, and I did not foresee that even deeper lay before me.

The night patrol had been withdrawn, and there was no guard to challenge me, while the few citizens I met gave me but passing attention, and that, probably, owing to my shabbiness. Yet, though I was unkempt enough, I was not in a state to demand interference; no one, not of the military dared go in a rich dress in those times; it would have marked him for destruction by the mob or by the authorities.

Walking openly, yet with eyes and ears alert, I went through street after street until, after a tiresome trudge, I came to a halt on the highway in the rear of Dench's house. The surroundings were changed, having lost their trim appearance; and I noticed that the near-by houses were closed, and before one the lawn was strewn with débris which spoke of mob-law and loot.

I did not dare to halt for long nor act in any way to excite suspicion; so, going to the high board fence, I discovered the gate unfastened, and in a moment found myself within the lawyer's yard.

Here I looked about. The ditch was still open, but the hole in the wall at the end of it — the hole

through which I had escaped some six weeks before — was closed by a heap of loose stones, no effort having been made to rebuild the foundation. I did not attempt to conceal myself, being fairly sure I would not be recognized if seen; therefore, I went openly to the well and slaked my consuming thirst, after which I felt like a man, and then went straight to the back door.

It was not fastened. Pushing it open, I entered the passage which I guessed would lead to the kitchen, and I was right, for upon opening the door at its end I saw the giant negress, Letty, bending over the fire.

As she heard the door close behind me she turned and looked, then threw her hands above her head and let out a bubbling cry of horror.

I was at her side in an instant, and clapped my hand over her open mouth.

“For Heaven’s sake, hush! Do you wish to ruin me after having saved me?” I cried, in a strident whisper.

“Fo’ de Lawd!” she gasped, looking at me in wide-eyed wonder. “Dey tole me yo’ was daid! I ’lows yo’ was yo’ ghos’.”

I quieted her fears by assuring her I was no ghost, nor even dead, and when I made sure that her cry had disturbed no one I started in on the business that brought me.

“Letty,” said I, “you saved my life once, now you must help me again. Will you stand by me?”

"Ah wants to know about mah brudder George," she answered, as if unwilling to commit herself.

"He's a hero. He escaped, but I have not seen him. He shall not suffer for his kindness, nor shall you."

"What yo' goin' to do?" she asked.

"Never mind," I returned. "Who is in the house up-stairs?"

"Mas' Dench," she answered, looking at me with more confidence.

"Where is Captain Brussel?"

"Fo' de Lawd, I dunno, sah!" she said. "He ain't here."

"Is Dench alone?"

"No, sah. He got a man wif him. He here all night."

"Who? a military man — a soldier?"

"No, sah; 'tain't no sojer; jes' a plain little man wif black eyes an' a sharp nose. He stay to brekfus."

I wondered who this could be, but as it was evidently some civilian it did not much matter to me save that his presence might delay my revenge. I sniffed at the appetizing odor of cooking, and for a moment forgot my errand.

"And this is their breakfast, I take it," I said, stepping to the hearth and picking up the frying-pan. "They may wait for it. My need is greater than theirs." And with that I began to

eat with my fingers, man being demoralized by hunger. The woman ran toward me with a cry of consternation, and attempted to take the pan from me, at which the brute in me leaped to the surface and for the once I was like any other animal with its food supply threatened. Drawing my bayonet from my sleeve, I turned the point on the negress. "Letty, I am hungry," I said. "I am even starving, and am going to eat while I may. Do not try to prevent me or I may forget what I owe you."

"No, sah," she said; "'tain't that, but the ole man has knocked fo' brekfus', an' if he doan get it pretty quick he'll be down an' pull mah hair. 'An' he'll see yo', an'—"

"He'll be sorry he ever did," I interrupted, continuing to punish the contents of the pan. "If he knocks again I will answer his call, and after seeing me he will have no appetite. Now, tell me what has happened since I left."

"Heaps an' heaps, sah."

"Did Miss Selden return here?"

At my question of the woman, giantess though she was, she broke down and cried like a baby; and I, who had been ravenously devouring the lawyer's breakfast, stood and looked at her in amazement.

"What has happened?" I finally asked, and I confess that I was afraid of what her answer might be.

CHAPTER XVIII

JUDGE EVERS REDIVIVUS

AT length I got her story.

Part of it was as I had surmised; the girl had been returned to Dench, but that which followed made my blood boil. There had been a fearful time when my escape and the flight of Louise had been discovered, though at first it was not thought we had gone together. In fear of his life — not knowing but I might be hiding near — Dench had barricaded his house, and between nephew and uncle there had been a violent scene.

However, as later I was pronounced drowned, and Louise was sent back to the care of her guardian by the authorities, matters went on quietly enough for a time, Brussel being away on continuous duty; but after Bunker Hill Brussel returned to the house to remain until his wound should heal.

The negress never spoke to him, nor was she allowed to communicate with Louise, who was confined to her room, a practical prisoner. Then there was much going to and fro of messengers; and only two days before, late in the night, a coach

had been driven to the house, and a soldier — it must have been my enemy, the sergeant — by Letty's description — got out of it, went into the house and up-stairs, and Letty heard him talking with Brussel.

The next the negress knew was that Louise screamed, and shortly after the young girl was carried down-stairs in the arms of the soldier and placed in the waiting coach, she being apparently unconscious. When Brussel followed the coach was driven away. Letty had not seen the officer since that night, and knew nothing of the fate of the girl.

"And was Dench a party to this outrage?" I asked, my teeth gritting as I pictured the helpless lady in the villain's power.

"No, sah — no, sah," answered the woman. "Mas' Dench wa'n't to home dat night. I hears him an' Mas' Brussel quoilin' 'bout Miss Louise de night befo' an' — oh, Lawd!"

The exclamation was drawn from her by a series of heavy thumps on the floor overhead.

"Is that Dench?" I asked, setting down the now empty pan and wiping my lips.

"Yes, sah — yes, sah! What'll Ah do? He'll jest nachully lam me wif his tongue, an' den he fin' out what come of —"

"Never mind, Letty," I said, going to the door. "Show me the way up to him, and I'll give you my word he will not hold you accountable."

At that moment there came a series of thumps on the floor overhead. "Where are you going?" I demanded as the negress ran past me.

"Gwine to tell him he's bleeged to wait," she said.

"You'll stay where you are," I commanded. "Does that door open to the stairs?"

"Yes, sah," said the negress.

"Then I will take your place. Busy yourself cooking another breakfast; I will need it very soon."

And so, without further preparation, I went upstairs just as I was. I was not familiar with the lower part of the house, saving the cell; but, believing the lawyer was in the dining-room, which was over the kitchen, I made my way to it by instinct. When I came to the dining-room I saw that the door was on a jar, and now, with a knowledge that the old lawyer had some one with him, I approached cautiously, determined to see the stranger, and if he were not too formidable to get rid of him in some manner. I was not in a mind to wait too long.

But, to my surprise, Dench was not in the dining-room. His guest sat at the table with his back toward me, and even before I recognized his face in the mirror on the opposite wall I saw that, physically considered, he would be as nothing in my hands. However, I forgot that fact and only realized that here was one who did not depend

upon physique for personal power; for the face I marked in the glass was the face of a man I had outraged. It was Justice Evers.

Now, though I had little fear of being recognized by him, for my clothes were in the last degree of shabbiness and I had not shaved since the day before I was captured on Bunker Hill, I backed away with the instinctive dread of one who comes suddenly upon a venomous snake. I made no doubt that my recent history had been retailed to the judge, and that, like Dench himself, he thought me either dead or a hopeless prisoner. If he should discover the contrary it might come to my doing violence on him, and I had no desire to injure him though I certainly would not permit him to stand between me and my determination to punish Dench. In any event Judge Evers was a stumbling-block, and one entirely unforeseen.

I confess to being nonplussed as for a moment I stood in the hall, undecided how to act, yet knowing action to be imperative. I could not leave the house and wander through the streets until such time as Evers went away; for I knew the sergeant's condition would soon be discovered and I searched for.

But what prevented me from stealing up-stairs and hiding until Judge Evers had gone? Nothing. I certainly would not be looked for in that house; and deeming hiding among the enemy to be the wisest course I went up silently, first slipping

the shoes from my feet, and entered the room at the head of the stairs — the room in which I had been struck down. A glance showed the place had recently been occupied, for the bed was tumbled and a portmantle stood on a chair. Doubtless Evers had occupied it.

With my late habit of making the most of anything at hand I locked the door, and seeing my way of retreat open by means of the window, I went through his honor's baggage. But I found nothing save a few toilet articles, shaving material and papers tied with a string. These last I decided to look over if I had the chance. The judge's nightcap and gown were also in the bag, and this suggested that as they were already packed his high and mightiness expected to get away immediately after breakfast; and that being so, his had not been a visit of sociability — he had come to Dench on business and not business of a legal nature, there being no civil law in Boston in those days.

I searched the room thoroughly. There was nothing else there, even the closet being absolutely empty; and so, unfastening the door and standing it half-open that I might hear any sound from below, I waited.

And soon I heard something. I knew that Dench came into the lower hall in a towering rage and roared for Letty. I heard the black come up from the kitchen and explain that an accident — I could not make out what — had ruined her cook-

ing. I heard Dench, the pious Dench, swear at her as he ordered her to hurry and prepare something for his guest — that for himself he cared for nothing. And then I heard him call Evers from the dining-room, laughingly apologize for the delay, and they both went into the office.

With a feeling of satisfaction I tip-toed from the judge's room, leaving the coast clear for his going, and went into the next chamber. It was a small and perfectly barren apartment — an unfurnished spare room — and there I waited further events, and to me, keyed as I was, I thought the time never ending. But presently I heard the men come up-stairs, go into the judge's room and close the door. Then it suddenly came to me that from where I was there was no path for retreat, and not caring to be trapped I sneaked down the stairs, now taking refuge in the dining-room, knowing that Letty would soon be there and I wished to see her.

But she did not appear, nor did any one else. After a while I heard Dench and his guest go down-stairs to the front door. They were evidently very serious and talked in low tones and the only words I caught were the last spoken as the judge shook hands with Dench. Through the crack of the door I could see them both.

"No, sir, you are mistaken," said Evers. "I have reason to know the temper of those rebels back in the country! This war will not be soon

over! I am universally laughed at for expressing such a sentiment, but I believe, sir, that General Gage himself begins to realize it. And I am sorry I can be of no assistance to you, Mr. Dench. I thank you for your hospitality, but not personally knowing the young man I cannot conscientiously recommend him to his excellency; and as I leave town this night I will be unable to make his acquaintance."

"You leave town!" exclaimed Dench, with unfeigned surprise. "How?"

"I am sorry that I may not say," said Evers, with a final handshake. "His excellency admonished me to keep the matter to myself. If it were generally known he would be overwhelmed with applications for like accommodation. Good-by, sir. I hope to see you again in happier times."

I was not surprised that Judge Evers had a conscience, and now I was glad we had not met in that house. Undoubtedly Dench had asked him to do something for Brussel, a favor which had been refused through principle, and my respect grew for the justice on whom I had once laid violent hands. And like Dench, I, too, wondered how he was to go from Boston that night. I knew later.

Now, being rid of Judge Evers I had Dench to dispose of, and it may well be believed that in my heart I had neither softness or respect for him. I both heard and saw him shuffle along the hall to

his office, his head bent so that I could not fairly see his face, his air being one of dejection and disappointment. He went into the room closing the door behind him, and for a moment I waited that he might become settled, in the meanwhile quietly helping myself from the food remaining on the table. I heard the clock strike half-past ten, and then, knowing it was high time to act, I left the dining-room and started to reckon with my treacherous host.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SECRET ROOM

THE office-door was closed, and locked, too, as it did not give under my hand. I knocked softly, and was rewarded by hearing the lawyer's voice as he called: "Who's there?"

I made no answer, only knocking again, at which I heard him come toward the door and unlock it, evidently unconscious of any danger and probably thinking it was Letty. He threw it open impatiently and stood astonished as he beheld a man instead of the black he probably expected to see. For the space of perhaps ten seconds he did not recognize me, which was not to be wondered at, nor did he move. I made no effort to help him out, only standing still and with my arms folded, looking at him and with a swift glance taking in the room behind him.

He was not dressed for the day. On his feet were carpet-slippers, and his thin figure was encased in an old bed-gown. In his hand was a paper he had evidently been reading when my knock interrupted him.

He had changed since I had seen him; he now appeared years older and was bent, and there was that furtive look in his eye which I connected with one of miserly habits. His features were sharpened, and he had the appearance of one who was always in fear of something.

My gorge rose at sight of him. His was the treacherous arm that had struck me down. It was he who had consigned me to a living death in the cellar of his own house, and now he was at my mercy. Why should I not slay the hoary villain and rid the world of him? For not only to me had he been treacherous, but to his country. He was but a spy against his fellows. Lord, how I hated him!

Repressing my instinct to close my grip on his scrawny throat, I stepped past him into the room, and, turning, faced him again, but not yet speaking. Ah, then he knew me! And I saw he held me in terror, not knowing but that I was a disheveled ghost. For suddenly the lines in his face seemed to double their depth, and his deepest eyes widened in abject terror. With a cry he staggered back, then turning, fled to what I at first thought was a common door in the book-lined wall, and tried to close it, though it was only partly shut as I overtook him, and grasping him by his thin neck, whirled him into the center of the room. As he regained his balance and leaned for support on his desk, I said:

"Well, sir, I am here! What have you to say for yourself?"

"Good God! I—I—How did you—" he stammered, and then stopped.

"It matters little how I came here," I returned; "but I have arrived to collect something of a rather large debt you owe me. Sir, sit down in that chair."

He obeyed meekly enough, and, too, as though he were suddenly too weak to stand, for he fairly fell into the leather-covered chair at his desk. His attitude was cringing; his face had turned yellow.

Kill him? I could no more have killed him than I could have killed anything so helpless and abject. Not that he was harmless had he the chance to be otherwise, but he was so servile, such a palpable coward, that I would not have been much superior to him had I laid murderous hands on him.

"Are you alone in this house?" I asked. He nodded, then became articulate. "No, Letty is below."

"Where is Louise Selden?"

"I don't know."

"You do not know that she was abducted?"

"No," he answered, with a sidelong glance at me.

"You lie!" I vociferated, moving toward him, at which he threw up his hands and exclaimed:

"I mean I did not know until she had gone. I — I really do not know where she is. I would not have harm come to her."

"You lie again!" I said. "You were ready to sacrifice her to that monster, your nephew. I heard you propose her undoing that you might save yourself from ruin. You are a snake, and unfit to live! Where is Brussel? Do not pretend ignorance to me."

As a man of the world Dench was a shrewd one, and undoubtedly he had read me sufficiently to believe that as I had not already killed him I would not do so unless I became blinded by passion. I think he tried to conciliate me, but at all events he straightened up in his chair and spoke with a measure of strength in his voice.

"You wounded my nephew, for unfortunately I must call him my nephew, though he runs counter to all my wishes. He came here after the battle above Charlestown, and was sick," he answered.

"His wound was not serious?"

"No, only severe — two buckshot in his shoulder."

"'Tis a pity they did not lodge in his black heart! Well, what has become of him?"

"A day or so ago he obtained leave and went — went down the bay."

"Where?" I thundered, taking another threatening step toward him.

"Stop — stop! I am telling — I will tell the truth. He went to stay for a time on Hog Island. We — they — I mean his majesty's troops have taken it by driving off the reb — the colonists. You do not believe me. Here, sir, read this; it corroborates me. It is from him."

He held out the paper he had when he opened the door, and was yet clutching in his skinny fist. I took it from him and read it. It was dated two days before, and ran thus:

Dear Uncle:

HOG ISLAND — Wednesday.

I have not improved my prospects, military or otherwise, by coming here. Have no better accommodation than a room in a windmill, and am pretty generally disgusted.

I wish you would prevail on Loring to get me an audience with General Gage. That the governor-general has never seen me would not injure my cause, and perhaps he has not learned of what Louise has charged you. He need not know our relations to each other.

Try to arrange matters at once, and advise me of result. My arm still lame, but is improving.

I always fear that the rebels will come here in force and dispossess us. We should be reënforced at once or the troops transferred to Noddles Island, which would be more important to us. Last night the rebels crossed from main and drove off fifty cattle, going scot-free.

Send me word by first opportunity.

I wish I had not come here, and that L. was with the devil who sent her into my life.

LAWRENCE.

I read the note without a change of countenance, but with one eye on the paper and the other on the old man who, I knew, was perfectly capable of stabbing me had he a weapon near.

So Brussel was out of my reach! Had he been as near as was his uncle I would not have spared him; there would be nothing about him to command pity, for even as he was writing this screed he knew of my danger and was banking on my death. I folded the letter and placed it in my pocket, then spoke to the cringing lawyer:

"I am willing to believe you are telling the truth regarding your nephew. I only wish I might visit him as I am visiting you; I would mighty soon convince him that both his plans and yours have miscarried. And this brings me back to the present. I shall be your guest for a few days, or perhaps but for a few hours. It shall be as urgency demands. As I would no more trust you than I would a rattlesnake, I shall make you a prisoner in your own house."

Dench made no answer, only staring blankly at me as if he but half comprehended my words. I stepped to the door and locked it that he might not run out while my back was turned, and placing the key in my pocket, walked over to the door he had tried to shut when he recognized me. But this latter did not open into another room, as I thought it did, unless, indeed, a large, brick-lined closet may be called a room. The door itself

was ingeniously contrived to hide what was behind it, for its outer side was lined with shelves and filled with books, and when this was closed there was no evidence of a closet, so accurately did it match the rest of the wall.

Here, then, was just what I wished — a place to confine the man and have him under my eye. Before entering the closet I turned and looked at the lawyer. He was closely watching me, his hands gripping the arms of his chair, his lean knuckles turned white under the pressure; but he said nothing and I went on with my investigation.

The place was plainly a secret strong-room, secure against fire if not against burglary, for the door, which had only a knob and no lock, was lined with iron plates. Piled on the shelves and on the floor were numerous old books, ledgers, cash-books, and the like, together with packages of musty papers, a cursory examination of which brought forth nothing of value to me. I was now in no hurry, and I kept in view the possibility of coming across something in the way of evidence relating to the remains of the fortune of Louise Selden, but not a paper bearing her name did I see, and I concluded that the wily old fox who sat outside had disposed of or hidden every evidence of his obligations as a guardian.

While I was browsing among these ancient documents I noticed that against the further wall of the strong-room, and apparently fastened to

it, was an unframed oil-painting of a beautiful young woman dressed in the fashion of fifty years before. Though it was covered with dust and showed no signs of care I was struck by the appealing melancholy of the face, and that it was a portrait of Dench's late wife, dead for years, I had little doubt. When I had done with the contents of the little room I went up to the portrait and passed my sleeve over the face to rid it of its fog of grime.

As I did so, using some pressure, to my astonishment there came from behind it a sound not at all like bending canvas; it was rather the snap that comes from bending tin; and then I conceived that behind the picture was something more than a bare wall. And I was right, for on close investigation I discovered that the work of art was but a disguise over the door of another closet, a door which had neither catch nor lock, but which fitted snugly into the brick-work. It was an old device and one that still exists in many houses of that time — a secret closet within a secret closet. I began to feel that my search, desultory in the beginning, would bear fruit.

While exploring in the strong-room I was hidden from Dench's sight, but my ears were trained for his slightest movement. I looked out and found him in the same tense and strained position, his eyes fixed on the book-lined door, and gathering a thing or two from his rapt attention

I began work on the inside door. It opened hard, but when at last it did open I forgot Dench for the moment, so absorbed was I in what I saw. For the dim light that penetrated the little closet showed me, beside a tin box covered with dust, several small canvas bags, and that they were bags of coin I knew even before I touched them and tested their weight. And by that test I became aware that their contents was gold.

Here was a find, though perhaps one of no account to me, I being no thief. Taking up one of the bags I carried it out into the light of the office.

CHAPTER XX

ALIAS CAPTAIN BRUSSEL

AS the old man saw what I held he jumped to his feet, threw up his skinny hands and let out a shout of pain.

“Oh, my God! Not that — don’t take that! I will give it to her! I am her guardian! I am but hiding it from Larry!”

“And from her,” I said, looking down on the creature. He did not appear to have heard me as he clasped his hands.

“Nay, giant though you be, you shall not rob an old man! My God, I cannot let it go!”

His voice was a shriek, and his fingers clutched the bag as I held it, his eyes gleaming with greed.

His attitude was a revelation to me; the man was money-mad — a miser — and one whose thirst for the yellow metal had prompted him to rob. Had he forgotten or failed to realize that I had overheard his infamous plot to mulct the girl of her fortune, the size of which I knew nothing. I thought I saw the whole matter then; he had her money, probably the proceeds of shrewd investment, and was holding it intact, or most of

it. The loss of his own wealth through the unfortunate venture about which he had told his nephew, together with a natural avariciousness, made it impossible for him to part with cash once in his possession. Gold was a god to one of his nature, its allurement stronger than any principle he possessed. Mentally I could see him running his claw-like fingers through the bulk of cool metal pieces, and gloating over them. I jerked the bag from his feeble grasp.

"So this is Miss Selden's, ha?" I said. "And between the two of you she has been lied to and outraged that you might take to yourselves that which belongs to her? Why, you whey-faced villain, you have me to account to now! How much is there in the safe?"

"Two — two thousand pounds," he whimpered, stretching out his hands. "For the love of Heaven don't take it! Let me have it — just to feel of. Oh, I cannot let it go!"

He was trembling like one with the palsy, and to my profound disgust he fell on his knees and clasped mine as he pleaded. "Get up," I said to the groveling man. "Once I thought you strong, but now you are a very dog."

He got back into his chair, clasping and unclasping his hands, a picture of weakness and avarice, his mania plainly uncovered through my unexpected find. To Louise Selden he had without doubt lied as he had to his nephew in the in-

terview I had overheard. "Feel it?" said I. "Faith, I am like to choke you with it! No one shall be robbed! Doesn't your sweet nephew know of this strong-room?"

"Nay, nor even suspects," was the almost whispered answer.

"That's more than likely the truth," I returned, laying the bag on the table, "for had he guessed at the whereabouts of this he would probably have made an end to his loving uncle long since! Let us see what is here."

I untied the leather thong closing the mouth of the canvas, and poured the bag's contents out on the table. It was gold — all gold — and in sovereign pieces, and as the coins settled on the wood the old man made a convulsive reach for the pile, running his fingers through it, just as I had pictured the miser playing with his hoard. The sound of it was music to him.

"Don't take it away!" he moaned, "I will give it to her. I will give —"

"Is it all Miss Selden's?" I asked. "But never mind, you would lie about it! However, we will have it out of your reach, my friend."

I gathered up the money, not attempting to count it, only judging there were about five hundred pounds on the table; and I had hardly replaced the last coin when the old villain sprang at me like a tiger, and yet not at me so much as at the bag I held, and tried to pull it from my

grasp. In the meantime his voice rose in a cat-like scream.

The man was fairly insane. I shook him from me easily enough, and he fell back into his chair whimpering like an abused child. At that moment my disgust for him was extreme, and though I knew he could be readily handled, he might become dangerous if left to himself. His screaming brought Letty to the door, which I unlocked at her call.

“Bring the old rascal something to eat,” I said, “and when you come back fetch a bed-cord with you.”

“Yo’ goin’ to hang him?” asked the negress, her black eyes wide.

“Nay, though he deserves it; bring the cord and trust me. This is for your protection as well as for mine. He knows your position now, so you and I are in the same boat.”

Hang him? No. But tie him? Yes. For I had made up my mind he was too subtile to be left hand-free, and had determined to bind him. When Letty returned, bringing with her a cord, I told her to go back to the kitchen, and setting my teeth, proceeded to bind the old man hand and foot, tying him into his chair, then lifting both, set them in his own strong-room. It must have been a tremendous experience for the once self-contained and influential lawyer to be handled in that manner, but it was the medicine due him. I

did not shut him in, but left the door ajar that he might have air, though threatening to leave him in the dark if he made an outcry. He was completely crushed, and I know not if he understood, for he made no reply, but he did not raise his voice after he was placed in the brick closet.

In the meantime I had removed the rest of the money, five bags of it, together with a mass of books and papers which I hoped to examine at my leisure, for now I felt perfectly secure, Brus sel being out of the way. As for a possible caller, Letty might dispose of him with any story she wished; surely no client would come, for the civil law was dead in Boston.

On counting the money I found that it was as Dench had said; there were two thousand pounds; and in a tin box, also from the inside safe, I discovered a number of papers, each referring to some properties in and beyond the city, and each bore the name of Selden, with Dench as his attorney. I felt that much might be unraveled by competent hands, and resolved to submit the whole matter to my father, if time should ever serve.

But in the meantime money and papers must be placed beyond the reach and even the ken of the old villain now a prisoner in his own safe, but nothing could be done while daylight lasted. When it was dark I would hide them somewhere outside the walls of that house.

Now, gold and title-deeds were not the only things I found that day; for on searching the tin box in the interest of the young lady to whom I owed so much, I made one other discovery. By itself, wrapped up carefully in a sheet of blue foolscap, I came across a paper which I recognized as a note-of-hand, otherwise, a regular promissory note, for fifty pounds, made by one David T. Dalrymple, and drawn in favor of some one whose name I have now forgotten.

However, as it was indorsed by Lawrence Brussel, my eyes became opened to its nature, especially as it was some two months over-due, and across its face, in red ink, was written the word "Forgery!" in large letters. Then I recollected Dench's reference to a paper he held over his nephew's head, and which had brought the latter party to agree to his uncle's scheme.

I saw through the matter now. Larry had forged the paper in the name of his own colonel, and having endorsed it himself, had prevailed on his uncle to discount it. The old man had done so, but on the note becoming mature Brussel had been unable to pay, and to prevent it falling into his commander's hands, had confessed to his relative. Later he had made good in some way, and thought the paper destroyed, but on the morning I stood at the door and listened he learned that he was on the brink of a disgraceful ruin if he ran counter to his uncle's wishes.

All this appeared plain enough to me, and seeing what a fine weapon I possessed, I folded it and carefully placed it in my pocket along with the letter from Brussel to his uncle, which I had appropriated after reading. Making neither head nor tail to the rest of the stuff, I bundled documents and gold under the hair-cloth sofa and began to consider my own future.

What should I do? for, of course, I could not long remain where I was. I was not safe on the streets at night, and during the day I might be recognized; moreover, I was shabby enough to attract attention anywhere.

Considering that I might remedy the latter difficulty without going abroad, I started up-stairs in search of clothing. Ignoring the room in which I had been assaulted I went on to the next and at once knew it had been occupied by Larry Brussel himself, for the smell of stale tobacco still hung on the curtains and bed-hangings. There was little in it to serve me save the uniform he had worn on the day of Bunker Hill, and the sword-scabbard with enough of the broken blade to hold sword and scabbard together. The uniform I knew, the ragged holes in the left shoulder, and the dark stain of blood on the cloth speaking loudly enough.

I examined the coat with a view of using it, as I had about concluded that if I was to escape from Boston it must be by way of the Neck, and

to pass that well-guarded point I should have to appear as — what? The uniform seemed to point the answer — as a British officer, of course, and nothing less.

But I would need a pass — indeed, I would be lame without one, though how I was to come by such a thing I could not imagine. I searched the pockets of coat and small-clothes in the foolish hope that a pass might be found, but though I failed in that, I discovered a paper which the wounded man had placed in the coat, and evidently overlooked. The thing was dated but five days before, and when I read it I became aware that Louise Selden, like Brussel, was out of my reach; more, she was probably with him, but in what condition I might only guess at. I ground my teeth as I read:

Larry:

June 30.

I consent to your proposition, but I must not be known in it. I shall be away that night.

If you paint me black enough you may succeed in convincing her of your devotion, but I fail to see how you are helping matters toward the desired end.

It will be well for you, if you bring her back as your wife; it may be ill for you if you do not.

Yours,

This precious document was unsigned, but it needed no signature. It made the blood leap in my veins. Here was villainy, without doubt, and

it was equally plain that the old sinner now in his strong-room had been glad to be rid of the girl and had played her into the hands of his worse than worthless nephew at a time when he should have been protecting her. And all to no purpose, so far as he was concerned, since I now held the girl's money and the key to the situation. Dench had pretended to me that he did not know where the girl was. Perhaps he did not; but he might easily have surmised; and I had my strong suspicion. She was with Brussel; kidnaped by him, in short. It was plain to me that she had learned too much for the comfort and safety of uncle and nephew and had, therefore, been abducted. And the attempt was being made to coerce her into marrying the man I now hated as I had never hated him before. My feeling toward him awakened me to the feeling I had toward her; it came like a sudden revelation; though I scarcely knew her, my debt of gratitude, the peculiar condition of our forced intimacy and her own attractive personality, once my eyes were opened to it, had exerted an influence over me which I had not taken into account. But now I knew how I felt toward the girl; perhaps I idealized her, but certain it is that I looked upon her and felt drawn toward her as to no other woman who had ever come into my life. I knew not exactly what love for a woman was, but I did know that if I did not love Louise Selden I was far on the road to it.

At all events while I lived no such moral leper as Hotfoot Brussel should possess her, save by violence, and even then not for long.

I had the best of reasons to believe the two to be on Hog Island. That unpoetically named spot, as beautiful as any about Boston, lay well down the bay and just off the Malden coast, being separated from Noddles Island by a narrow arm of the sea. They might as well have been in Palestine, so far as I was concerned, though the island was so small that I might have searched every house and mill on it in a single day.

How could I get there? I could conceive of no way save to escape by way of the Neck, go round by land, ferry myself to the island in the face of a British detachment. And then? Heaven only knew what would follow.

But the scheme was wild; it would take me a week to get there, and here I was mewed up in the center of the enemy's stronghold. I was fairly cornered, though not yet at bay. My fingers itched to get at the skinny throat of the lawyer who had been the cause of this coil, but I knew I would do nothing to the helpless villain. My self-respect was not yet dead.

Bothered as I was, I came finally to a decision. I must get to Hog Island though the heavens fell or it took a month.

That night I would hide the girl's money, then, disguised as an officer, using Brussel's uniform, I

would go boldly to the water-front and try to obtain a boat. If I could steal one, well and good; if not, I would try some other way, for get to the mainland I must.

Even the settling of this much put new life into me, and I prepared myself for as desperate a venture as I had ever attempted. The day passed, dragging along without more excitement than that which came from thinking and eating. Of the latter I did my fill, then fed the captive, bringing him out of his close quarters and setting free his hands. But not a word would he return to my questioning, hardly looking at me, nor did he eat as if he relished his food — the last not causing me any wonder.

I thought him too deep and dangerous to remain loose; therefore, I again fastened him to his chair and set him in his prison. He made no resistance, though he looked like a surly dog who was watching his chance to bite, so I had no pity for him and made him see the price he was paying for his treachery.

As darkness fell I made ready for my attempt to escape. With Dench's own razor I shaved, put my hair in order, then got into Brussel's old uniform which though not a perfect fit served well enough, and to make the stain and tear in the cloth less conspicuous, I improvised a sling in which to lay my left arm, the linen crossing and covering the rents and bloodstains.

I appeared to lack nothing in the way of equipment. Even the sword, which no officer would appear without, was provided in the broken one. It was useless as a weapon, but it made a brave enough appearance, and so, wrapping its belt around it, I carried it down-stairs, and looking at myself in the mirror, had a realizing sense of the value of fine feathers; certainly no one would identify me as the ragged fugitive who had sneaked into the house that morning. I doubt if my own father would have known me, rigged as I was. When Dench saw me his eyes lighted, he probably thinking for the moment that I was Brussel come back, but when he discovered his mistake he squirmed in his chair. But he said nothing, not even wasting his breath in cursing me; but he was not a profane man.

There was but one thing left to be done before I started out, and that to dispose of the gold and box of papers. Over them I pondered for a time. The bags might be sunk in the well, but not so the tin box; and not wishing to separate them, and being at my wits' end for a way to dispose of them, I left the house by way of the office window, taking the stuff with me in two trips, and then I buried them by lifting a flagstone of the path to the well, scooping a hole under it sufficiently large to take in the several packages. The accumulated soil I threw into the ditch, and replaced the stone. It was nine o'clock when I

started on this, it being fairly dark, and even Letty knew nought of what I had done. Now I considered money and papers safe until such time as I could put the proper owner on the right track of them, not thinking it would fall to my lot to uncover the treasure.

I regained the office without difficulty, reopening the door of the old man's prison that he might have air. I well remember the hour; it was striking ten by the tall hall-clock, and I was just wiping the perspiration from my forehead when there came a loud rap at the front entrance.

Had it been a volley of musketry I would not have been more startled. Quickly closing the disguised door on my prisoner, I slipped into the uniform coat and adjusted the sling, though my left arm was ready for action at any moment.

Taking the candle from the table, I went into the hall, set the light some distance from the entrance, and proceeded to open the door.

I don't know what I had prepared myself for, but I confess to being almost shocked as I saw a British corporal standing at attention on the top step. As he saw me he raised his hand in salute, and then I noticed he had no musket.

"Captain Brussel?" he said.

Now, before answering I had to think quickly. Who was the fellow? If from Brussel's regiment he would know that officer and promptly

smell a rat if I should answer to his name. I therefore decided on being non-committal.

“Well?” I returned.

“It was thought that you might be out of town, sir,” said the soldier, “but I was told to deliver this letter if you were found.”

“Who are you from?” I demanded.

“From Commissioner Loring, sir.” With that he held forth a paper, which I took from him.

“Any answer?” I asked carelessly.

“I don’t know, captain; but I think so.”

“Step inside, my man,” I said, not caring to be seen from the street. He obeyed, and I closed the door. Then, going to the candle, I tore open the letter and read:

Captain Brussel:

You have me and yourself in a fine fix. Your orderly sergeant was found dead in an upper room of Whipple’s empty warehouse, his body being chained to a dog. The rebel, Darcy, whom I passed to your control, has escaped.

As he was known to have been confined in that room by your orders, I am required to show how the prisoner passed from my hands without warrant or trial, and while damning myself in the explanation, I shall certainly damn you also unless you come to me and show a possible way out of the dilemma.

I must answer by ten in the morning unless I am willing the matter gets to the ears of his excellency, who does not yet know. Come at once. Will receive you at any hour.

L.

Here was a coil for some one, but not for me.

I confess I was rather taken aback at the death of the sergeant, but it was a thing that caused me no remorse. He was a brute, and deserved all he got. I turned to the waiting soldier.

“ You are from Commissioner Loring? ”

“ Yes, sir.”

“ Tell him I will see him before the hour named. Tell him also that there is no cause to worry. That is all, my man.”

I opened the door.

As I did so I was startled to see another soldier coming up the few steps. He was armed and evidently bent on business, for after a quick salute he said with official abruptness:

“ Captain Brussel is to proceed to headquarters at once.”

“ What’s this? ” said I, almost forgetting the rôle I was playing. “ By whose orders? ” I added, catching myself.

“ Orders of his excellency, sir.”

“ General Gage! ” I exclaimed in astonishment.

“ Yes, captain,” said the man, “ and I am told to escort you as soon as possible.”

“ I will wait upon his excellency at once,” I returned, ignoring the reference to my being escorted.

“ I shall have to obey orders, captain,” said the man, standing stiffly, his musket across his chest in the position of a salute.

"What!" I exclaimed. "Do you mean I am to be escorted as a prisoner?"

"I think if arrest was thought of more than one man would have been sent for you, sir," returned the fellow, the ghost of a smile on his face, "but I was ordered to return with you."

"Very good," I answered; "remain until I am ready. You may take my answer to Mr. Loring," I said, addressing the first man, and waved him out. He stepped to the porch and I closed the door on both.

And then I felt as if the weight of the world lay on my shoulders. Right on the verge of my attempt at escaping had come two unexpected matters, one of which was of serious and immediate import, and the other threatened me if I escaped the first. I was between Scilla and Charybdis.

I was not afraid of Loring, for ere he would attempt to hunt up Captain Brussel on the morrow, I hoped to be gone from Boston. But the command to headquarters! That was a matter to brook no delay. What could be in the wind, and how could I escape? One thing suggested itself, and that, violence. I cared not for one soldier, armed though he was. I might order him into the hall, attack him, bind him, and put him in the cellar. I did not doubt my ability, nerved up as I then was, but there was one great objection to the risk.

The man from Loring had not gone on his

way, but stood talking with the last messenger, as if he were in no hurry. As plain as need be I could hear the voices of the two. And I dared not open the door and order him off — that would be unlike an officer — and, too, I was supposed to be getting ready to go to headquarters.

While I was in the depths of my quandary as to what to do to get out of obeying Gage's order, there leaped into my memory the letter I had taken from Dench, written from Hog Island. In it was the statement that the writer was unknown to General Gage. This came to me like a rope to a drowning man, and with it came the realization that the matter could have no connection with the escaped prisoner as Loring's word had just assured me that as yet General Gage knew nothing about it. Later this assurance proved to be false, but it fixed my decision then; for now I conceived that instead of being a menace, a trip to headquarters, where I was not known, might open up a way to escape, the means of which I had not yet been able to settle.

Risk is part of the play of life, the conservative and cowardly rarely accomplishing anything, and as I saw even this chance loophole I resolved to act up to my name and test its possibilities. Who could tell what might come of it? I was now submerged to the neck in a sea of danger, and I might as well swim out and try to cross the flood.

There was little I had to do beyond seeing

Letty and telling her I was going away and might not be back. She was dozing in the kitchen, not having heard the knock on the front door, and when she found a British officer carrying a candle she let out a shriek of dismay, thinking, as she told me, that Brussel had returned, and having made way with me, liberated his uncle and heard how she had assisted me, had come down to take his revenge on her. Though she might have broken Brussel across her knee, had she obtained a good hold on him, the woman was a coward, as are many large-bodied people. I did not tell her where I was going, but I did tell her where to find Dench, and also that she might release him if I was not back by noon the following day.

But this she stoutly refused to do, saying that as I had imprisoned him I might care for him, and that to let him go would spell ruin for her. I could not blame her, and so I left the house with large doubts of ever entering it again. As for the negress, faithful to me though she had been, I had promised her nothing for the present, but I made her future rich if I escaped and she did her duty to me. The great black had not berated me for the coil she was in, and wished for nothing but to get from Boston and join her brother. This, however, she could not do, as for her to obtain a pass without the consent of her employer would be an impossibility. I could give her no hope, but I wrung her hamlike hand and bade her

good-by as fervently as if her skin were as white as her worthy soul.

I went out with my head high though my spirits were not at a like altitude. I strode on, and behind me at a respectful distance, walked the two red-coated soldiers, the one from Loring seeming to care little how late he was. As for me, I cared less.

Then it struck me: Would he tell Loring that Captain Brussel had been called to headquarters? If the commissioner sent or went there for me the result would be tragic. My safety lay in not being recognized as a fraud by any one knowing Brussel, and while the risk was a very tangible one it was not pressing at that hour.

But the facts could not be blinked even though they did not alter my determination. Here was I, an escaped prisoner, not acknowledged as a prisoner of war, but charged with being a deserter from his majesty's forces, dressed in the uniform of a British officer, and upon my head the death of a British sergeant.

There could be only one result were I discovered and captured. I would hang by the morrow's sunrise.

Hang! Never! Not when desperation could invite bullets and bayonets. I knew I was holding my life in one hand, but I maintain I held to it without a quaver, though with many doubts.

It did not seem like a long walk to Provence

House, though it probably took more than fifteen minutes. Twice I met the patrol, and twice did the guard stiffen to "attention," salute, and let me go by. I then realized the power of an officer's uniform as I had never before done, and when passing the Granary burying-ground I saw a couple of armed soldiers standing at the gate, while within, among the tombstones, there moved several lights. Once in a while there was a shout, but I could make nothing of the situation.

Suspecting something of the matter, I stopped by the guard and asked what the trouble was. Both fellows saluted, and one answered promptly: "'Scaped prisoner, sir."

"Ah! Any one of importance?"

"Don't know, sir; only he killed his guard last night, and a dog that was with him. That's all I know, sir."

"Very good!" I returned; and satisfied that I was being searched for and that the trail was mighty cold when it led to the Granary graveyard, I passed on, my guard coming after me. A few moments later I came to my destination.

It was quarter of eleven as I went up the long flight of steps leading to the front door of Provence House.

Even at that hour there was plenty of coming and going of officers, but everything was quiet and formal. Save for their swaying one might have thought the sentries on either side of the

great doors were carved in wood, but their muskets rang as a man, a colonel, as I afterward knew, passed out, went by me in the dusk, and flinging himself on a horse, galloped away. At that moment I had no idea of what a narrow escape had been mine. Had I been ten minutes earlier I had probably been ruined.

My guide followed me into the historic old house, but did not go into the luxurious reception-room into which I was ushered after giving the name of Brussel to the gorgeous flunky who asked for it.

I sat down, my heart beginning to thump with unusual vigor, and every nerve in my body was singing like an overstrained harp-string. In my present position there was not the excitement I had experienced when on Bunker Hill I saw the enemy approaching. Nay, it was worse, having a menace which the other situation did not possess; it was more like the threat of the bloodthirsty hound from which I had escaped.

Would I have the same fortune here? Heaven knew, but I know I felt a decided relief when, after five minutes of exquisite agony, the flunky reappeared as suddenly and much more silently than a jack-in-the-box, and clapping his heels together, held open the door with one hand, saluted with the other, and announced in a loud voice:

“His excellency will receive Captain Brussel.”

Now I was in for it, and despite my hopes for

the immediate future I felt like one who had been called to execution as I arose and followed the man, calm enough as to appearance, no doubt, though by my tingling cheeks I was aware that the blood was leaving them.

CHAPTER XXI

THIN ICE

AS I walked along the spacious hall I mentally figured on my chances if I were compelled to make a break for liberty. They were small. Beside the two sentries at the front entrance there was another at the door I was approaching, and, moreover, there was the over-dressed flunky, who was a big man. No, I should never be able to escape by running; if discovered, I was lost.

The room I entered was a large one, brilliantly lighted and luxuriously furnished; its high ceiling paneled and its walls richly decorated. The impression I received was of grandeur, but my direct attention was given to the man who sat behind a broad mahogany table placed in the center of the apartment and under a crystal chandelier, the candles of which had been recently renewed.

The vagaries of the human mind are strange; at that moment, and while my life was at stake, my brain stooped to take cognizance of the two dozen candles being consumed, and I thought of the bill the king must pay for this reckless burning of wax and tallow.

But my mind did not wander for many seconds. Pulling myself up into a martial stride, I went over the thick carpet to where sat General Gage, Governor of Massachusetts and commander-in-chief of the British forces in America.

I was impressed by the man, and favorably impressed, for, though an enemy, a glance showed him to be a gentleman, that is, a gentleman according to the test of the touchstone of aristocracy, which takes account of manners but not of morals. Not that General Gage was a grossly immoral man; in that respect he was probably no worse than others of his station in life. Undoubtedly he was looked upon as an honorable man else Dench would not have feared him and compared him to Hutchinson. As for his outward refinement, that was clear enough.

He was in undress uniform, and his sword, with its belt wrapped round it, lay on the end of the table. Near him, but at a separate table, sat his secretary, his back toward me, his body bent far forward. I have an idea that he was asleep, but to the casual observer he might have appeared to be at work.

No one else was in the room.

When within a pace or two of Gage, I halted with military precision and saluted. The general looked up, his smooth forehead contracting.

“This is Captain Lawrence Brussel?” he asked in a low voice.

"Yes, Your Excellency."

"You have been wounded!" he exclaimed. "I did not know that! When?"

"During the late action at Charlestown," I answered, the strength of my voice increasing with my confidence. "But, sir, the wound is hardly an inconvenience now, and never was serious."

"I am glad to hear it," he replied. "It was somewhat uncertain about you having returned! Colonel Dalrymple, who has but just left me, rather thought you had not."

I started at my narrow escape, a start fortunately not noticed by Gage, but was now certain that my identity was unsuspected. This gave me confidence. As the general paused I thought he might be expecting something from me, and so spoke.

"I did not meet Colonel Dalrymple, Your Excellency. I returned from Hog Island hardly two hours ago, and was about to report when I received your summons."

"Hog Island!" exclaimed Gage, sitting up. "Have you been on Hog Island?"

"Yes, Your Excellency."

"Why, sir, Colonel Dalrymple thought you were at Castle Island and sent for you there this morning, but the commander knew nothing of you. It was by the way of taking a chance that I sent for you at your uncle's house."

Here was an unexpected flaw in the wind, but I

at once trimmed my sails to it. I am fairly quick-witted at a pinch, thank God.

“Yes, sir,” I replied. “I went to Castle William but did not report, and at once proceeded to Hog Island, as, being on leave, I thought I had a right to do.”

“Ah! And why to Hog Island?”

“Your Excellency, there is a lady there, and —”

“I think I see,” he interrupted.

“I went on her account,” I finished, not knowing what else to say.

“Yes? Well, perhaps it is fortunate you did,” was the astonishing reply. “And what are the conditions there?”

“It is quiet, Your Excellency.”

“We have no force there. Do you think one is necessary?”

“Not on Hog Island; there is little need. But Noddles Island could be of some use, it having both cattle and grain, whereas Hog Island has but little of either,” I replied, having in mind Brussel’s letter.

“Well, Captain Brussel,” said Gage, settling himself, “it is upon this very business that I sent for you. I have received your application through Commissioner Loring, but how I will act upon it will be determined by the manner in which you do your duty. Are you willing to cut your leave and return to service?”

I do not know if my face betrayed my perplexity, but I am sure my voice did not. I was aware that I was skating on extremely thin ice, and at any moment it might break under me. All I knew for a certainty was that up to that minute Gage had no suspicion as to my identity. To his question there was but one answer I dared make, and I promptly gave it.

“Yes, Your Excellency.”

“It is because I am told that though you obtained your commission in England you are colonial born and have lived for many years in the vicinity of Boston and are familiar with the surrounding country that I have picked you out. Am I right?”

“I know the country well, Your Excellency.”

“That makes it possible for you to serve his majesty better than most men. Do you know the exact location of Danforth’s mill?”

“On Noddles Island? Yes, Your Excellency, I know it.”

This was no lie, Danforth being on the northern extremity — owner of one of the windmills of which the islands in the bay, as well as the mainland, had not a few.

“Good!” returned Gage. “I have received word that it is stored with grain intended for the rebels. I wish to secure it, and the cattle on the island as well. Since this rebellion has broken out, I am loath to trust one not in his majesty’s

service; but, sir, you have both the knowledge required and the proper uniform."

He paused and took snuff, brushing the superfluous grains from the lace of his cuff, then continued:

"Sir, will you volunteer to do duty first as a guide?"

For an instant my heart seemed to cease beating. Had the man before me offered me a million pounds I could not have been more surprised and elated.

Act as a guide! That meant getting beyond the lines without risk. But what was I expected to guide? A force against my countrymen?

The thought sobered me; but, with my usual headlong precipitation, and with the hope that my wits might show me a way out of my dilemma, I answered that my duty to my king forbade me to hesitate offering myself for any service he, or those in authority, desired.

"Very good, Captain!" said Gage. "I trust, and I believe, you will acquit yourself. Your first duty will be one of no danger and requires no discretion on your part. I have decided to occupy Noddles Island, and wish you to guide a detachment there."

"When, General?" I asked, as he hesitated.

"This very night, sir. The expedition starts at one o'clock from Hancock's wharf. It is short notice, but it becomes necessary. You will de-

liver your written orders to the officer in charge. He will obey you until you land, at which time you may consider yourself relieved and will proceed to act in another matter — one which will make demands on your courage and judgment. Do you begin to comprehend?"

"Thus far, entirely, Your Excellency."

"I am afraid you do not," he returned. "I am asking you to act in the capacity of a spy. Are you willing?"

As his scheme opened it was all I could do to conceal my satisfaction, but I held myself erect and motionless and, as he looked sharply at me, I hesitated only long enough to give effect to my answer.

"I will do anything Your Excellency desires," I said.

"Then, sir, after guiding the force to the mill, you will get to the mainland in any way you can, penetrate the rebel camp, determine their numbers, their disposition, their spirit, and, if possible, their intentions, and return to me as soon as may be. If you are successful, I think, sir, I can guarantee you the post you desire."

"I thank Your Excellency," I replied, bowing and hoping he would say no more about a post I certainly did not desire, nor did I know what it might be that Brussel coveted. This was a rock on which I was liable to split. But Gage did not pursue the subject. Without turning in his chair

he raised his voice and called: "Willoughby," at which the sleepy secretary started as if shot, swinging around and showing a pair of drowsy eyes.

"Take down," said Gage. The secretary became very much alive and seized a quill; Gage directed without a pause:

Captain Winterburn — These will be the credentials of Captain Lawrence Brussel. You will put yourself under his orders until you reach Noddles Island, at which point you will resume command.

You will then obey verbal instructions as already given and seize the grain in Danforth's mill, also any horses, cattle and sheep as may be found on the island, and such matter as may become necessary to the king's military service. And for so doing this will be your warrant. You will then remain, holding the island for the king until reënforced or relieved.

The secretary brought the finished paper and laid it before Gage, who signed it with a flourish, folded it, and handed it to me.

"You will find Captain Winterburn at Hancock's wharf," he said, pulling at his lace cuffs. "You may also find there will be a passenger. Of that I am not sure; but you are in no way responsible to or for him. You will leave Hancock's wharf at one o'clock, and not later. In the meantime you had better report to Colonel Dalrymple."

I will be likely to, was my mental return, but in voice I answered:

“ Yes, sir, but — ”

“ But what, Captain? ”

“ In view of my mission to the mainland I would return to my uncle’s house and obtain civilian’s clothing as a disguise. I will hardly have time to report.”

“ True,” replied Gage; then, after a moment of musing, he looked up at me. “ Captain Brus-
sel, that reminds me of a question I would ask. What do you know of the prisoner I understand you captured yonder? ”

He jerked his head in the direction of Charle-
town.

“ Colonel Dalrymple has told me something of his having escaped after killing his guard and tying him to your hound. How is it, sir, that you happened to have a hound in barracks? Are you not aware of the regulations? What was the prisoner doing where he was found? Can you tell me? ”

In the face of Loring’s letter to the effect that Gage knew nothing of the tragedy this came as a terrific facer; but before I could gather my shat-
tered wits and frame some kind of an answer, Gage leaned forward and struck a bell on the table. Instantly the door flew open and an or-
derly appeared.

“ My compliments to Colonel Dalrymple, and tell him I would like to see him at once,” said the general to the man; then he again turned to me.

“Now, Captain, we will clear this matter, and at the same time obviate the necessity of your going out of your way to report.”

Was there to be no end to this? Here was another thunderclap out of a clear sky. I was fairly staggered at the thought of meeting Colonel Dalrymple, but now, having gone thus far, it was no time for me to hesitate. I must plunge. The orderly had received his orders, but he had not been formally dismissed on his errand and still stood rigidly by the door. Gage appeared to have forgotten him. I cleared my throat, but for a moment I could not speak.

“Well, sir?” said Gage, with a trifle of asperity in his voice. Had he seen the picture I drew in my mind he would have had out his fine sword and cut me down then and there.

“Your Excellency,” I replied, getting a hold on myself, “I thought the hound was dead. I instructed my orderly to shoot it, sir. As for the prisoner, regarding him I am mystified; this is the first I have heard of his escape. Commissioner Loring had him in charge.”

I considered this as neat.

“Very true,” replied Gage, and, turning to the orderly, he said: “You will also notify Commissioner Loring to come at once to Provence House. Go, sir.”

The man saluted and went out; Gage turned to me.

"I feel that there is a crooked spot in this matter, and it is to your advantage to have it cleared, sir. I think you will have time to go to your uncle's and return before proceeding to your rendezvous. Hurry back, Captain."

It was with inexpressible relief that I heard his last words; but they did not make me safe, though they relieved me of being damned as an impostor on the appearance of Colonel Dalrymple and Commissioner Loring, and though I might ruin the latter by producing his letter to Brussel, it would serve no purpose of mine.

I must get from Boston, and at once. But how? The chances were that on my protracted absence search would be made for me, Dench's house thoroughly probed, the old man discovered, my identity made clear, Letty ruined for assisting me, and the dogs of war set on my trail; and all the margin I had was the time it would take for Colonel Dalrymple to arrive and the hour for my reappearance at Provence House to pass.

For a moment I was shaken — almost panic-stricken, but Gage's voice brought me to myself. There was not the least sign of suspicion in his words, and they opened my way to freedom and safety.

"By the way, Captain, you may need a pass through our lines when you return, especially if you are hurried; but I am loath to give you one, as such a paper found on you, were you captured

by the rebels, would be a sentence of death. I hear they have a new commander, a Mr. Washington, who once served the king under the lamented Braddock. I understand he is something of a soldier, and a spy is a soldier's bane. Were I he I would have you hanged. But I will give you a pass, if you insist."

If the man had been the least suspicious he might have questioned my eagerness and caught the double meaning of my words. As if a stone had been rolled from my chest, I replied:

"General, when the rebels catch me, which they will not do, they will quickly discover that I am a rebel spy, fresh from the British lines."

I forced a laugh as I spoke.

"And, sir," I continued, "when I tell them that I was bright enough to hoodwink Your Excellency and obtain a pass I will have their applause. I shall have my story ready for them. I know that gentry, sir; they are easily gulled. As for Mr. Washington, I know nothing of him, but I would to Heaven, sir, that he and Your Excellency measure swords in the near future."

By this time Gage was writing rapidly, but I saw the ghost of a smile of satisfaction at the corners of his rather serious mouth.

"I think I have made a wise choice, and that you are bright enough to carry you through," he said, folding the pass and handing it to me. "It is something of a pity that you are colonial

born, else I might help you to a better office than the one you ask for. There, sir, make what haste you can. I shall look for your return in an hour."

I had no reply to this, nor was a reply necessary; moreover, I felt that I had said enough. With a feeling of intense relief I bowed low, placed order and pass in my pocket, saluted in form, and pivoting on my heels, fairly ran from the room.

CHAPTER XXII

MOON EMERGES

AS I went out into the warm, still night I felt like a man recovering from a fit of illness. For a few minutes my knees fairly shook, and though I was aware that haste was necessary, I could not hurry.

But the air soon braced me and brought my frayed nerves into something like normal order, though for a time I was anything but the Devil I had been named.

My way was now clear to place myself beyond the zone of danger; but as I walked along I thought of Letty. Was I to run and leave the negress to suffer? I could not do it without forever damning myself as a coward. She had practically twice saved my life, and had she wished she could have betrayed me on my return that day and been rewarded. Should I sacrifice her now? Her position would be known as soon as Dench was found and she would be made to suffer certain destruction. Nay, by Heaven, I could not leave her unconsidered and unprotected, and retain my self-respect. I would give her the pass and tell her to get from Boston; as for myself, I might not

need the paper; at all events, I must make a shift to do without it.

Moreover, if the factor of time would but serve I could do better than run; I might still reach Hancock's wharf before my status was discovered, and I had a mighty reason for wishing to guide Captain Winterburn. The thing came to me like a burst of light.

And now I figured on that item of time, and figured closely. It was then nearly a quarter after eleven, for I had marked the clock in the hall of Provence House as I passed out. Neither Colonel Dalrymple nor Loring would be likely to see Gage before twelve, and then there would be no suspicion of the fraud practiced until some time later. A soldier would eventually be sent to determine the cause of my delayed return to Provence House, and before he could report and action against me could be taken it would be past one and the expedition well on its way under my command. I would see to the rest.

Of course there were chances that something might go wrong; that went without saying; but with my campaign now clear before me, and formed as I walked, I hastened my steps. I had repassed the Granary burying-ground, which was silent now, and the guard withdrawn, and was walking rapidly, when upon turning a corner, I came upon two soldiers, having between them a civilian evidently under arrest, a third soldier, car-

rying a blazing link, walking ahead. Ordinarily I would not have looked twice at this quartette, but something about the prisoner caught my eye and, as the torch flared up and brought out his features, I halted abruptly.

For the escorted man was none other than Jacob Moon.

Had he been my own father I could hardly have been more taken aback. He looked much the same as when I last saw him, though his clothing was disarranged as if from a struggle, and his hat was missing, thus displaying his long, queueless white hair. This last, I believe, was what had attracted my attention. His face was serious, but displayed no fear. He looked at me, but it was plain that, dressed as I was, he did not know me.

I have said that many times I have been moved by instinct alone, and now it was that I again came under the domination of that sixth sense about which so little is understood. I do not know what possessed me — certainly not a hope of being able to help the old man — but standing surprised as I was, I spoke out sharply as the soldiers saluted and the party was about to pass. "Halt!" I cried. They came to a dead stop.

"Who have you there?" I asked, with the superior and domineering air I had often noticed as the attitude of superior toward inferior. It was the torch-bearer who answered.

"A suspect, sir."

"Suspected of what, fellow?" I demanded, moving into the light that Moon might recognize me.

"He was sneakin' round the Copps Hill battery, sir, and could give no account of himself. He has a street permit, but we think it not a good one, sir, and we be takin' him to the provost that he may be proved."

"Ha!" said I, seeing a possible opening; "let me see that pass."

Now I was to learn what weight an officer's word would bear, and though I took a risk, I could not see old Jacob go to what would be certain death without an attempt to save him. There was no officer among his captors, not even a corporal, and I guessed they were of the night patrol. To my infinite relief the soldier neither questioned my right to command him nor did he hesitate to obey. Fishing round in his pocket he brought forth a paper and held it out to me. I read it by the light of the link he lowered, and saw it was drawn to one Cyrus Elliot, but I did not attempt to read it through, my mind being made up and there being no time to waste.

I looked fixedly at Moon and in a moment marked his eyes widen; then I was aware that he knew me. I spoke sharply to the soldier:

"So this is the way you respect an official pass!" I said, raising my voice as if in anger. "I hap-

pened to be in the room when this was issued to Mr. Elliot, and I will vouch for his truth and loyalty. He is out on a mission from headquarters, and his excellency will not thank you for the blunder you have made. To what regiment do you belong?"

"Dublin Grays, sir," answered the spokesman, with an air of shrinking.

"Very well, my man; report that Captain Brus-
sel, of Colonel Dalrymple's regiment, has taken
charge of your prisoner. Were you on patrol?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then off with you, and thank me that I do not make you suffer for your stupidity. March."

Though I do not believe the men doubted my identity, I do think they were suspicious of the regularity of this high-handed proceeding. However, they fell away from Moon, though somewhat reluctantly, and finally marched off; but not in the direction from which they came; without a doubt in my mind, they went on to report on how they had taken and lost their prisoner.

Here was no place to talk to Moon. Passing him, I said: "Follow me, Jacob;" and went on, he returning no word though I saw he understood, albeit he was a bit dazed by the sudden turn in his fortunes. It would not do to squander a moment, and I hurried along, hearing him behind me.

On arriving at Dench's house I knocked loudly and thought Letty would never open the door, but

she came at last, dull and sleepy-eyed, having been abed, and I whisked into the house, followed by Jacob, after which I closed and barred the door.

"Is there anything new? Has the squire made a racket?" I asked the sleep-dulled negress.

"No, sah, nobody been here an' de squire he doan make a soun'," she answered.

"Very good; then get ready to leave here at once; you are in danger."

"Fo' de Lawd!" she began, becoming fully awake; but I stopped her outcry by saying: "Letty, get ready to go to your brother. You must start to-night."

With that I left her abruptly, taking Moon by the arm and leading him into the office.

"Jacob," I said when we were alone, "I know not that I have done you more of a favor than postpone your hanging, or hang with you if we are caught. I am dancing on a hot griddle at this moment. My story is more important than yours. Sit down."

So, with as few words as possible, I ran through what had happened since I saw him. The old man did not turn a hair at the desperate situation the end of my story showed us to be in; instead he smiled broadly.

"Well, son, ye have no lack o' wits in a delicate muss, an' ye be more than quits with me for the little I have done for ye. Ye have no call to take me on yer shoulders from this on, seein' ye have

about all ye can carry, an' I be safe enough. But I am fain to quit Boston, having found out all I came for, that being that Gage is more scared of us than we of him."

"And how did you get that permit?" I asked.

"By throttling the man who held it. I know naught of him save that his name is Elliot, and that on his sleeve he wore the white band of Ruggles's Pups, being one of the citizen soldiers. I gave him little chance. His body may be found floating somewhere in the bay."

"When was this?"

"Three days agone, my lad. I got in by way of a small boat from Lechmere's Point, but had to abandon her; now 'tis hard to get out of the place. But we have been talkin' over long; ye had best be off on yer mission."

"Ay," said I; "but I'll first have a look at Dench; he must be in sore need of air."

So I opened the concealed door, old Jacob widening his eyes as he saw a segment of the bookcase come away from the wall.

Dench was where I had left him, his head now hanging so that his chin rested on his chest. As he took no notice of the candle I carried I at first thought him asleep, then that he was dead from suffocation, though the air of the apartment was hardly foul enough to kill him, being only hot and close.

However, I soon discovered him to be alive,

for he breathed, though but faintly. And alive was about all I could say for him, as I quickly saw the cause of his apparent indifference. When I lifted his head I knew him to be totally unconscious, though his bleared eyes were open, and when I loosened his bonds — which I did for humanity's sake — I knew why. I had my suspicions at once, and on prodding him with the point of a steel paper-file I determined that the old man had fallen a victim to his age and passions.

For he was paralyzed, having been stricken by an apoplexy, and a child might have seen he was past all help, his face being hideously drawn. I looked inquiringly at Jacob as together we lifted him to the haircloth sofa.

“I think the Lord has been good to ye, my son,” he said. “Now, had I been in your shoes, it is like I would have knocked him on the head long since; but ye have escaped the necessity of getting rid of him. And now what?”

“Now what! Why, Jacob,” I exclaimed, “this means the way out for you! With this old devil’s tongue forever tied there is no danger to Letty, so you may take the pass and run for it. I shall go the way I intended; there is yet time, though we have spent much. I can be at Hancock’s wharf in less than half an hour; and I am not yet suspected.”

“Why not use the pass yerself an’ give me the

letter of instruction? 'Tis the safer way for ye, my son — an' ye have risked enough."

"Because, Jacob," said I, now giving voice to the matter which had boiled in my brain from the moment I was told to act as a guide to Danforth's mill, "because there is that little lady you wot of! I am not going to desert her! Listen to me. She is with that villain Brussel, whose part I am playing —"

"An' they be on Hog Island?"

"Ay, on Hog Island! But, Jacob, if that British captain was at all acquainted with the bay he would need no guide; as he does, by the Lord above me! if he doesn't find himself on Hog Island, believing it to be Noddles, it will be because something untoward happens to me. I would face the devil I was named for rather than miss this chance of meeting Larry Brussel! Dost see?"

The old man clapped his great hands together. "Ay, I see!" he almost shouted. "I would that I might be with ye! Could ye not arrange it?"

I did not answer him, for at that instant there came a knock on the front door. We both started to our feet.

"Lord, boy!" said Jacob, lowering his raised voice; "they be hot on the trail of one of us! Out of the window with ye — I'll attend to the caller."

"God bless you, Jacob!" I said, squeezing his

hand, after hurriedly thrusting into it Gage's pass. "Explain to Letty that she is now in no danger, but must wait before going to her brother. You—"

Another violent knock interrupted me. I heard the negress tramping up the stairs, and Jacob snatched up the candle and ran from the room to intercept her; then he went to the door and threw off the bar, while I stood in the now dark office ready to run to the window, though for the moment having a full view of the hall, and I thought Moon would never open the front door.

The man who entered was not the soldier I feared and expected, but an officer, nevertheless. He was stout and puffing from hurry, and his red face fairly glowed in the light of the candle Moon held up.

"Captain Brussel—I wish to see Captain Brussel at once! Get him out of bed, if he's in it. I've got to see him. I am Commissioner Loring, sir. Do you understand?"

The words seemed to be blown in explosive puffs from between his thick lips. This was too much for me; I would rather have faced a file of soldiers than the British commissioner of prisoners, and without waiting to hear more, I ran to the window and put out a leg, my eye in its last sweep taking in the few visible details of the room which I never saw again, Dench's house being one of the few fired by a shell from an American battery, and

totally destroyed. However, I mentally reconstructed it when, a year later, I recovered the gold buried under the pavement.

Very quietly I lowered myself to the ground, but instead of going through the gate I scaled the fence and, as I dropped on its further side, it came to me that I had not obtained my own clothes. I was still dressed as a British officer, and it was too late to return to the house.

I really cared but little as I hurried off. Twice I met with the provost patrol, but my scarlet coat saved me from challenge. By this I had a good grip on myself, and with returned confidence was really enjoying the tremendous game I was playing.

Unlike Griffith's wharf, Hancock's was far from being deserted, as upon it were received stores of all kinds from the fleet. The pier was piled high with supplies, from long, black-bodied cannon to stacked barrels of flour. At the land end there were a number of sentries, but they only saluted me as I hurried past them. At the far end of the pier I came upon the man I was after. He was walking up and down, and, in the silence of the hour, the click of his boot-heels sounded loudly. Seated on the string-piece I saw a civilian, but in the darkness marked only the bulk of his figure. Undoubtedly it was the passenger whom Gage had intimated as possibly going in a boat and for whom I would not be responsible. Still beyond him I

saw the shadowy outline of a number of soldiers, and I guessed they were of the waiting force. I took a long breath and set my teeth as I walked up to the officer. Would he be acquainted with Brus sel? I could not tell; but this I knew — if he de nounced me as a fraud, he would find himself in the bay, for I would strike, and strike quickly and hard. Just then I was Devil Darcy, and in all modesty I think I justified the name.

CHAPTER XXIII

A GREEN HAND

“**C**APTAIN WINTERBURN?” I asked, saluting with one hand, the other being hidden in the sling.

“Ya-as,” he drawled, taking his pipe from between his teeth. “And you are—?”

“Captain Brussel, detailed to guide you to Noddles Island. I have just come from Provence House, and have these orders for you.” I held out Gage’s letter. The man knocked the ashes from his pipe, and even in that light I could see he was a young fellow.

“In the name of Heaven!” he exclaimed impatiently. “I have been packed with instructions. My dear fellow, let us start at once and begin on this cursed business. I am disgusted with life! Think of being sent off to an island, and one with such a name as Noddles, to bag cattle and grain; and I in new quarters with my allowance just arrived.”

“Go to Gage with your plaint,” I returned severely. “Is your command ready?”

“Ay, and has been for half an hour.”

"Then we will get off at once," I returned. "It will be a long pull. And I was given to understand by General Gage that there might be a passenger. Is this he?" And I indicated the figure seated on the string-piece. He arose as I spoke.

"Ay, he is here," returned Winterburn, as if the matter interested him but little. "Captain Brussel, this is Judge Evers, of the King's Assize."

That pride goeth before a fall is an old biblical saw, and surely with me its truth was exemplified. For not only did my overweening self-confidence, which is but a form of pride, go to the ground with a crash, but my body was nigh to going with it so great was the shock caused by the realization that I was almost cheek-by-jowl with a man whom I knew must hate me. But only hate me as Allen Darcy; and my first feeling was one of thankfulness that it was so dark he could by no possibility clearly see my face. As for my voice; he had heard it but once and then it was shaken by excitement. I had been through a severe school since then. It was the judge who spoke first.

"I am more than pleased to meet you, Captain," he said, shaking the hand I had automatically thrust out. "I had the pleasure of enjoying your uncle's hospitality last night, and we were speaking of you. It is a surprise that you are in town!"

"Ay?" I managed to ejaculate, swallowing my heart, which had seemingly been in my throat.

"Yes. And I wish to express my regrets at being obliged to speak to him as I did. He will doubtless explain. It was too late. I am going to Malden, if not interrupted, and hope to be back next month, when I will see you again. However, Captain, perhaps we may become acquainted on this trip."

"Not if I can help it," was my mental rejoinder; but aloud I said something conventional, and leaving him rather abruptly, drew Winterburn aside.

"Captain Winterburn," I said, "you will please see to it that yon legal lighthouse is not in our boat. You and I are likely to discuss matters which we would not care to have any civilian hear."

"I agree with you," was his ready response. "I have little use for those gentry; they are forever making trouble, and live on the trouble they make. Shall we start?"

"At once," I returned.

Summoning his sergeant, Winterburn ordered him to get the men embarked in the string of boats I soon knew was trailing alongside the wharf. I stepped away, not wishing to be talked to by Evers, and watched the black forms of the men as they tumbled into the six whaleboats. There were some thirty soldiers and one officer, a lieutenant, besides Winterburn, and it was with decided relief that I saw Judge Evers ordered into the third boat. But I really cared little for him or for the

number of the British; though the latter occupied my eyes my ears were trained upon the land end of the long pier. From there would come the first alarm.

I thought the men would never finish embarking, but at length they did, the first boats waiting for the last and looking like great black spiders as they lay on the star-gemmed bay. My nerves had again grown tense, and that I had escaped with but scant leeway was apparent but a few minutes later. I had taken my seat in the last boat, and it was already some rods from the wharf when I heard the ruffle of hoofs on the street as a horse came along at a tearing pace. Instinctively I knew, though I could never prove my knowledge, that the rider bore an order to arrest me. I held my breath as I listened.

The horse I had heard suddenly stopped, its rider evidently halted by the sentries at the pier-head, and perhaps the delay saved me; for when I heard the clatter of hoofs on the loose boards of the wharf that structure was already buried in gloom.

At that moment there came floating from some steeple the sound of a clock striking one; the horse stopped on the end of the pier, but whoever its rider might have been he did not hail, not seeing us, and in a moment more I heard the horse go back at a great pace. Captain Winterburn, at my side, appeared to notice nothing, only continuing

his patter over the ill luck that took him from Boston. I returned short answers and urged the necessity of speed, then told him my instructions and that I should leave him soon after landing. The young fellow showed additional respect for me when he learned my errand to the American camp, and wondered how I dared attempt it in the uniform of an officer. I sidled past his pertinent question by telling him I had a disguise awaiting me on the mainland, then gave him to understand I did not care to be questioned on matters connected with a secret errand.

And so, miffed as a youngster is apt to be, he left me alone.

By the route I led this flotilla I knew we would run into the patrol-boats; and we did; but our passage was hardly delayed, Winterburn showing his credentials and I forever urging haste. Finally we were beyond the last of the big frigates.

It was a quiet night, and the swells of the harbor were sluggish, so that our progress was not hampered. There was no moon, but the stars were fine and the air delightful after the heat of the day.

In the boats was complete silence, save for the chugging of the oars and the swirl of water as its surface was torn by twenty-four broad blades. When I looked back to my situation at the time the day before I felt as if years had intervened.

Now, while Noddles Island is hardly a mile

from Boston, Danforth's mill was over three good miles away, by water, being on the eastern extremity.

However, it was not to Danforth's I was going, and so, not to give the young fellow an inkling of where he was or the course I was taking, I led the little fleet as far south as I dared, so that when I turned inward Hog Island would be the first land seen.

As for the mill — there would be small difficulty in carrying out the deception, for there were two that I knew of on Hog Island; and if I had not known it I would have gathered the fact from Brussel's letter to his uncle, in which he spoke of having quarters in a mill.

We had been going for something like an hour, and I had changed the course to northward with Hog Island straight ahead, Noddles bearing northwest, the rock called Bird Island behind us.

I was getting close to my quarry, and was about to speak to the officer at my side when he said: "What land is that yonder looming over the bow?"

"'Tis Noddles Island, our destination," I answered, lying glibly enough. "You will be obliged to beach your boats; but as there is little surf it will not be a difficult landing."

"And then I take charge of affairs?" said Winterburn. "On my honor," he continued, "I have no business to be sent on this mission! It is

meant as a punishment to me for being in difficulty with a superior — a difficulty not recognized by the military code. My being here is from spite — from spite, sir. Do you understand?"

"I follow you," I said.

"And I am as green as grass," he went on openly, "and so I am going to ask you to help me out, if you have the time. I hardly know what to do! Will you go to the mill with me?"

"And take your orders? No, sir," I replied.

"By no means — by no means!" he hastened to say. "Keep the command. To be frank, I have never seen service, and have no doubt I was sent to be made a fool of by — no matter who. Lord, Captain! I have been in America for only five days, having arrived on the last ship." His voice was so lowered that the men straining at the nearest oar could not have heard his impassioned words.

I saw his trouble. He was a young fellow, a raw hand with a fire-new commission, and just off a transport, who had never heard a shot other than from a fowling-piece or saluting cannon. In some way he had offended a high and mighty official, who could not or dared not bring him to trial, but who had influence and could command an unrecognized punishment. I pitied the stripling, and it came to me that by staying by him I might be of service to the miller. Who he was I could only guess, but it would not be Danforth.

Now, I knew Danforth to be a Whig dyed in the wool, and as politics ran pretty evenly through the trades, I judged that the unknown miller who was about to be robbed was also a Whig, and it was my duty to make matters as easy for him as possible. This I might do by acceding to Winterburn's request and retaining command of the force, and therefore I told the officer I would help him, telling him that I had also suffered from jealousy and injustice.

And so, as we rowed along, I gave him an outline of my plan.

"It would be wise to be silent," I said, "for it is possible that the rebels have out a party on the same errand as our own. Therefore, I suggest that you and I go to the miller's house alone instead of at once attacking the mill itself, first posting the men. If Danforth is loyal to his majesty we will have no trouble; if not — however, that will wait until we reach it."

"I hardly see the point you are making," said Winterburn, "but doubtless you are right."

Now, I saw the point clearly enough, for it would set me free to look for Brussel without interference, as on arriving at the miller's house, I would discover that I had made a mistake, having landed on Hog Island instead of Noddles, the two being separated by a narrow channel which might be forded at low tide. Then I would apolo-

gize and explain, sending the young fellow and his force on their proper way.

But some plans go wrong in spite of care and foresight.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE MILL

HOG ISLAND is made up of two hills, with a margin of swamp and a short stretch of beach. The larger hill is in the center of the island, the smaller on the southeast extremity of it, or on the point we were approaching.

On the summit of the smaller of these hills is, or was, a windmill, and this was to stand for Danforth's until I could conveniently discover my mistake. Against the starlit sky I could see it as we landed, lifting its bony arms of wind-sails against the velvety blue.

"There's your quarry," I said to Winterburn, pointing to the bulk of shape and shadow made by the mill, and glad enough that I had gauged its locality correctly.

"And what is a light doing in it at this hour?" he asked, craning his neck to get a better view.

"I cannot guess," I said, myself surprised as I caught a gleam from a window. "It may be that the miller has wind of this affair and is removing his stock — between us and the rebels he is bound to lose it. If that rabble doesn't raid the island ere long it will be strange!"

I said this in all sincerity, not knowing that Noddles Island had already been twice raided by both parties, and that a skirmish had resulted in the defeat of the Americans.

We were now ready for action, but the light in the mill decided me to alter my plans; instead of marching on the miller's house I determined to go directly to the mill and get at what was there going forward. The men being assembled on the sand, instructions were given to the lieutenant, a mere boy, to form them round the mill, permitting no one to leave or enter it. Winterburn and I went up the hill in the wake of the silent force.

Though the light showed that some one was awake in the somber building, I heard nothing of movement either within or without, and thought it strange. The yeomanry of the colonies was not given to keeping late hours; and yet here, after two in the morning, was some one with a stationary light, which, in a place like that, was a mystery of itself. I did not think it likely that the miller's apprentice would be burning tallow where it could be seen from his master's house; for a house there was; as we raised the hill I saw it snugged among a bunch of trees some three hundred paces from the mill itself.

We halted a moment and inspected the gaunt structure of the windmill; something — Heaven knows what — making me take in its outward

details as far as the gloom would permit. But there was little to see beside the giant wings which almost swept the ground, and the great balancing beam on the opposite side with a cart-wheel at its end to make the shifting into the wind an easy job. The lower, or immovable, part of the mill was like others of that time. The door was approached by a long flight of wooden steps, and there was a small, meal-covered window on one side of it; but one would have had to be an acrobat to get a view through it from outside.

Over the front door was a wide opening on the level of the second floor, a grain lift, with its beam and hook for a tackle and fall. The whole thing looked ghostly and forbidding in the darkness; the weather had beaten its shingle-covered sides until they were of a silvery gray, and the building must have been very old, for here and there a section of its covering had fallen away, leaving a dark patch.

I touched Winterburn on the arm and we went on to the front door. There had been no noise, and no alarm had been given, for the light still shone steadily from the little window. The silence of the place was like a weight.

I do not believe that Winterburn was fearing anything at that time; it might have been, however, that he felt disaster in the air and hung away from it, or that something of a subconscious nature warned him against entering the building. At all events, instead of moving at my side, he

fell a pace or so behind me, drawing his sword as he walked.

I wondered if he were suspicious of me, and stood ready to cut me down. However, I did not alter my pace, but went up the long steps cautiously, making no sound, as if I were bent on a crime; and I know, too, that it came sharply to me that I was totally unarmed, the few inches of blade attached to the hilt being useless for either offense or defense.

As I neared the door I discovered it to be slightly ajar. Turning to Winterburn I drew his attention to it; he nodded, and then I saw that his face looked like chalk in the starlight. But I gave his appearance no further thought as I pushed open the door; nor was I greatly surprised to see a man in his shirt-sleeves and hatless seated at a table on which burned a candle.

He was facing the door, his head bent low over the table, and he was writing rapidly, being so interested in his work that he had not heard our entry. Thrown across the table was a dusty miller's coat, and close by it was a long pistol, a detail not strange at that time.

The feeble light of the single candle did not bring out many features of the place — which took up the whole of the lower floor of the mill — but I caught a glimpse of the stairway of rough steps leading to the floor above, and the trap-door, now open and leaning against the wall.

The heavy beams overhead were festooned with meal-covered cobwebs; there were a few, perhaps a dozen, full grain-sacks piled against the wall, and there was the common accumulation of the accessories of such a place; but my quick eye noticed that the floor had been clean swept and there was a semblance of order not usual in a grist-mill. I had but just finished taking in the situation, and was about to speak, when Winterburn gave a short cough, the sound of which caused the man at the table to lift his head with a nervous start.

And then I started myself.

For there, again at close range, sat Larry Brussel.

At sight of us he sprang to his feet, but the light of the candle being in his eyes he did not know me, though I knew him well enough for all that he wore the dress of a miller.

For an instant we three stood there, I stunned by my discovery, and Brussel too surprised to gather the import of the appearance of two British officers. In that brief time I noticed his left arm lay in a sling.

But we did not long remain in a state of inaction, and it was I who gave the man before me an inkling of the situation. For I spoke, though to this day I have no idea what I said. I only know that I took a step forward while speaking, Winterburn being behind me.

The sound of my voice, and my approach, unsealed the mystery to Brussel — or unsealed it enough for him to know that he was facing an enemy — for with an oath he fell back from the table, then, recovering himself, he leaped to it, seized the pistol, and, without a word of warning, leveled it at me, and fired.

It was well for me that the light was in his eyes, the man surprised, and the apartment a large one. As Brussel shot he was at least twenty feet from me, with the table between us, and the conditions made his aim faulty.

As it was, the heavy bullet passed between my body and my right arm, tearing the sleeve of the coat I wore, and struck Winterburn, where I never knew. I only know the stunning explosion was followed by a groan, as the young man fell to the floor, his dropped sword clattering over the bare boards.

And then I awoke to the fact that the conditions had, for me, suddenly whirled to a reverse, and, unless I acted quickly and accurately, I was lost. The pistol-shot would assuredly bring in the lieutenant; explanations would be in order, my way of escape blocked, and I ruined. This must be prevented.

Brussel stood as if transfixed, his body veiled in the haze of smoke from his firearm. He did not see the result of his shot, nor is it likely he marked

me as I sprang to the door, closed it with a bang, and dropped the bar into its place.

For the moment I was safe from interference from without, and if it were decreed that I were to meet my end here, that end would not be before I had settled with the man standing by the table. At that supreme moment I felt I was living but from second to second, and not to lose him, I turned my attention to my ancient enemy.

I never saw a face look blacker than his as he saw me wheel from the door and strip off my coat. As I have said, I had no weapon, but my passion was such that I thought of none; I wished only to get my bare hands on the man; I had little doubt of the result.

“What are you doing here?” asked Brussel, finding his voice, but not moving.

“You hardly need three guesses at it,” I answered, throwing the sling from my neck and rolling up my shirt-sleeves; then I stripped off the useless sword I wore and sent it clattering into a corner.

“How did you know I was here?” he demanded.

“I did not know,” I returned. “The Lord guided me here. But I do know the depths that you and Dench have gone, and I am selected as an instrument to punish you, you dog; your uncle is already punished. Where is Louise Selden?”

“ Damn you!” he retorted. “ Do you think I am a child to be played with? Mark me well; I have disposed of one of you and will soon settle with the other!”

“ You have shot an officer of his majesty’s,” I said, advancing toward the table. “ As for me — get this before I punish you. I escaped. I killed your henchman, the sergeant, though without meaning to, hanged your familiar, the hound, returned to your uncle’s, made him a prisoner in his own strong room, and by a bold stroke succeeded in making Gage think I was you.

“ Listen, you villain! Gage ordered me to guide a force to Noddles Island. I knew you to be on Hog Island, your letter to Dench telling me that much. I knew you kidnaped Louise because you feared her tongue — as well you might — and you failed to take me into your reckoning. It were an easy thing to gull the boy you shot. I brought him here that I might get you; he thinks he is on Noddles Island. Do you follow me, you villain?”

“ Do I follow you! Ay, I do!” shouted Brussel, backing away from me. “ Dost think — nay, then, it is you who have reckoned badly! By the hot foot of Lucifer, I am glad you are come! I will settle with you at once — you rebel — you spy — you —”

“ So much the better!” I shouted back, and at that moment the lieutenant, evidently puzzled by

the shot and the closing of the door, came up the steps and called his superior, trying to open the door in the meanwhile.

“Do you hear that?” said I, pointing at the barred entrance. “Outside are the king’s troops — and that should explain my hurry! May Heaven forgive me, but I am going to kill thee now.”

By then I had worked myself into a mad passion; I was far from being myself, and, as I finished speaking, I crouched and again moved toward my man. The wounded officer groaned and tried to rise, but fell back helpless. I had no ill feeling for him, but I could give him no attention.

At the door there were now shouts and violent knocking, but I had no fear of immediate interruption, the windows front and rear being high from the ground and scarce large enough to admit an adult. But if I thought Brussel would remain where he was and submit to being choked to death, I was far out in my reckoning. As he saw me advancing on him, he stood but an instant, then he turned and sprang toward the wall.

I at first thought he was making for the stairs leading to the floor above, which could he have attained, he might have been safe, as he had only to drop the trap. But I had looked to that and would have had him by the heels ere he was half-way up.

However, his move was entirely different and took me by surprise, for, instead of running up the stairs, he dodged behind them and at once reappeared with a drawn sword which he had evidently placed in the closetlike nook. Swinging the blade over his head, he laughed in my face and, raising his voice, shouted:

“For the king — for the king! Break down the door! Break down the door!” With that he jumped toward me.

Here was another reverse. With the discharge of his pistol I thought the man unarmed, but now saw that he had the whip-hand on me. I could not dodge beneath his guard as I had done at the White Horse, and the odds being against me, I started to get the heavy table between us.

But at my first step I trod on the sword of the fallen officer, and anything in the way of a weapon being a godsend I stooped and picked it up, recovering myself just in time to meet Brussel's ferocious assault. His first wild thrust I managed to parry, but I knew I was no match for him in the art of fencing, for though his skill was not great, mine was less, and I was sure that, barring accident, his steel would find my vitals within a few minutes, if not seconds.

Now the clashing of metal was mingled with the shouts of the soldiers banging on the door, and it was when the din was at its height that clear above it all I heard the cry of a woman. It

seemed to come from the upper part of the mill, though muffled as if issuing from a closet, and a moment later, as plainly as I ever heard anything in my life, I heard Louise's voice calling my name.

The sound stirred me like martial music, though instead of giving me confidence it only made the situation appear more hopeless. There looked to be a double triumph in store for Brussel, for beset within by a man who was my superior in swordsmanship, and without by a howling mob of redcoats, what could I expect? and what the girl look for?

But for the moment I only considered myself, and to save me from being impaled on the sword of the officer whose white teeth now showed in an evil smile, I was giving ground before him, parrying his attacks with my best efforts.

It was not until I had been backed against the table that my wits worked to a purpose. With an open curse at him, I jumped round the end of the board, hoping to put the massive thing between us; but Brussel seemed to anticipate my move, for he sprang to one side, thus cutting me off.

It was then that I changed the complexion of matters, for in the second it took him to shift his ground, I reached for the candle with my left hand, grasped the heavy copper stick, and hurled it at his head. Had it hit him, the affair would have been at once settled; but it missed him, fly-

ing past and striking the wall of the mill behind him.

At once the interior of the place was in total darkness, and I, taking advantage of the sudden and bewildering gloom, sprang toward the stairway, found it, and ran up to the floor above.

At the top the darkness was as profound as on the floor below; but I found the door of the trap and, without attempting to conceal my line of flight, I dropped the heavy cover over the hole, the bang of the oak planks sounding like a cannon-shot as they fell into place.

Then I threw my weight on it, blowing like a spent runner.

What had I gained? It looked to be but a few moments' respite and rest, for as plainly as if I were in the room below, I heard Brussel run to the door and throw off the bar; the next moment the soldiers poured in and the place was filled with a babel of shouting.

But presently it became more quiet, and I could hear Brussel's raised voice; I also heard the striking of flint and steel, as an attempt was made to rekindle the candle; and, at length, this was successful, for I saw the light shining between the cracks of the thick flooring.

There was no immediate attack made on the trap on which I was sitting, and that for the probable reason that there was difficulty on Brussel's part in getting the young lieutenant to understand

and believe the true state of affairs. That there could be two Captain Brussels was rather more than the young fellow's brain could comprehend. One was undoubtedly a fraud — but which? I should have thought my flight and Brussel's act of opening the door might have settled the question.

I had not heard the girl's voice since I reached the upper floor, and now, with regained breath, I was about to call to her when I heard the tramp of a footstep on the stairs, and immediately after there came a knock on the trap.

"What is it?" said I, without an attempt to conceal my position.

"I am Lieutenant Bostwick, sir, and ask you to submit to arrest until this matter can be cleared. This is by order of Captain Winterburn, who is badly wounded. We have the man who shot him."

"Do what you will with him," I returned, for I knew not what else to say.

"And you will not surrender?"

"Never. Take your man to Gage and tell him he has a poltroon for an officer."

"Waste no words with him, Lieutenant," I heard Brussel say. "Force the trap and shoot him on sight. Ten pounds to the man who gets him dead or alive."

I have small doubt that he did not wish me taken alive. It would have meant a trial, which,

though it ended my life, would spell ruin for him. The inexperienced lieutenant paid no attention to his words, and on my again defying him proceeded to lose his own temper.

“All right, you cursed bullheaded zany!” he finally shouted. “I have you boxed. The place is surrounded, and unless you surrender at once I will smoke you out. I now believe you to be a spy.”

“Smoke and be cursed!” I retorted. “But please do not forget that there is a lady imprisoned somewhere up here. I heard her call.”

“Find her and send her down,” was the short answer to this.

“I will, if you will grant a truce,” I shouted.

“He lies,” cried Brussel. “There is no woman there.”

But the words did not convince the lieutenant. I heard him command Brussel to be silent, then he again spoke to me.

“Will you admit you are Allan Darcy of the rebel army?”

“I am Allan Darcy of no army,” I replied. “I came here to punish the villain you have captured, and if you will send him up here alone —”

“Enough of that,” interrupted the officer. “I am not fighting women. I will give you five minutes in which to find her; after I will show you no mercy.”

With that he went down the stairs.

I had sufficient faith in him to leave the trap, and promptly fell over something on the floor. It proved to be a bit of scantling, and I pushed it toward the trap with the idea of using it to fasten the door against assault. But I did not advance in finding the girl.

Again and again I called her name, but received no answer, and at last concluded that I had either been deceived in thinking I had heard her or else she had fainted and was lying in her prison unconscious.

The surrounding darkness hampered my search more than anything else. Three feet from the open grain-hoist the dense gloom was more like a thing than a condition. I could not see my hand before my face. I went feeling along the walls, hoping to come upon a door, but only encountered bins, barrels, and machinery.

And then it was that I came nigh to being the victim of the lieutenant's treachery; for while I was feeling my way around, and while the truce was still on, not having been terminated by either time or word, I saw the trap lift, the light from below first catching my attention; the next moment the door was flung back and a soldier jumped to the floor. Behind him was another man bearing a candle; both carried muskets.

There was but one thing I could do. I still hung to the sword I had picked up, and now I leaped forward out of the gloom, before the sol-

dier could get his bearings, and passed the blade into his body.

With a yell he fell backward, carrying his comrade with him as he plunged to the floor below, while I slammed down the cover and again stood on it.

CHAPTER XXV.

FIRE

A STATE of confusion took the place of the silence that had reigned below, and at once a shot was fired into the trap, but its heavy planks held me safe.

My heart was racing at my narrow escape, but my wits were still alert, and minding me of the scantling, I felt for it, found it, and, placing one end on the trap, jammed the other under a cross brace in the wall; then I felt secure from another attack by way of the stairs.

At that time I was filled with rage rather than fear, for I could only remain at bay and wait for the enemy to make a move; had I seen a chance to escape, I would have attempted it however desperate it might have been—but the only means of egress was through the grain-lift door which was thirty feet above the ground, and, moreover, the mill was surrounded.

I went to the opening and cautiously looked forth; the gloom was too great to permit the marking of details, but I caught the shadowy figures of a number of men close by the mill. In a moment they bent and lifted something, and then I saw

they were carrying away either the officer Brus-sel had shot or the soldier I had attacked and probably slain.

But no further assault was made upon my position; doubtless the conditions were puzzling to the young lieutenant, who had his hands full. I afterward learned that this hopeful young idiot was perplexed as to what his duty was, inasmuch as he was not on Noddles Island, to which the expedition had been ordered, and this was not Dan-forth's mill. He had little initiative, and his want of decision was really the cause of my final escape.

I felt rather than knew that the room below was occupied, though I could not hear a sound from it. Was it possible they thought to lure me into a belief that my way to escape lay open? No, it was not that, as I was soon made aware.

In the month of July the sun rises early, and finally pale dawn began to creep over the scene, penetrating the old mill and dissolving the black shadows of the upper room to which I was confined. I soon began to make out the form of objects in the place; gradually there loomed up the machinery of the mill, the great shaft running out to the wind-sails, the little door just above the giant stick, a short ladder leading to it, the coarse, wooden cog-wheels, the giant hopper, and the net-work of cross-beams holding the whole together, while over all was the silvery dust of meal. A row of bins was on one side of this loft, and at

its end I soon made out a door leading to what appeared to be a small room. Such a door I had looked for in the darkness, and now I hastened to it.

There was a lock to it — a padlock — but the key was missing and the door was fast; but though it was of no great strength, it was too much for me to force without aid. I looked round for something to use as a ram, and I caught sight of the scantling over the trap. I was in a hurry now.

Removing the brace, I rolled some barrels of grist on the trap to take its place, and with the stick attacked the door. I had no doubt that Louise Selden was within that little room.

It was just as I delivered the first blow with the scantling that I became aware of the nearness to its close of the drama in which I had been a too prominent actor; for as the wood sprung and splintered under the impact of the ram, I smelled a faint odor of smoke, and a moment later I had guessed the truth.

It turned me cold. The lieutenant had executed his threat; the mill had been fired, and in their eagerness to get the man they had not considered the woman.

Now, I have no wish to pose as a hero in this bit of history, but as Heaven is my witness, I thought less of myself at that moment than I did of the lady I believed to be behind the door I had attacked. So certain was I that personally I had

no chance to escape that the pungent odor of burning wood threw me into no panic of terror.

Truly, I dreaded being burned — but I would no more burn than I would hang. I would only have to appear in order to invite a bullet and have my career cut short; as for death — I had looked upon it as inevitable from the moment I found the tables turned on me. Therefore, this new danger did not cause me to forego my efforts to save the girl — it rather increased them; for I knew the old structure would go like paper, once it was well afire, though it must be some minutes ere the heavy timbers would hold the flames, or I be in danger of suffocation from the rapidly increasing smoke.

So, with a will born of unselfishness — if love is ever unselfish — I rammed that door until the fairly demolished woodwork gave me an opening through which I could look. And on thrusting my head into the ragged hole, I was astonished.

The room was empty, as I could see at a glance. It had probably been built for a mill hand or apprentice, as under its little window was a shelflike bunk fastened against the wall. There was also a small table with an inch of candle in a tin stick, and a bit of rag carpet lay on the few feet of floor; that was all in the way of furniture.

Under the table lay a half-open portmantle, and thrown upon the bunk was a uniform coat of scarlet. Here, then, were the quarters of Brussel

— quarters at which he had complained in his letter to Dench; but there was no sign of Louise Selden ever having been there.

I was bewildered, but exceedingly thankful that the girl was absent — but, not being there, whose voice had I heard calling me? and from where? It was a mystery I could never more than partly explain, and just then did not try.

For my situation had become tragic and matters for me were fast narrowing to a climax. The smoke was issuing from the cracks of the floor and sailing upward in increasing volume to the mass of timbers overhead; but as yet its density was not stifling. Cautiously I went to the open door of the grain-lift, and screening my body from the shot I was not yet ready for, looked out. Broad day was over land and sea, though the sun was not yet above the horizon, and everything was clear when the light wind wafted away the smoke which curled from the door below.

Now I could see Brussel, and near him stood Judge Evers. Hotfoot was standing under a tree over near the miller's house, and that he was a prisoner was made plain by the two armed soldiers on either side of him. Directly in front of the mill, but fifty feet away, were four soldiers, and to the right I could see two more, all with attention fixed on the burning mill.

It was plain that the building was surrounded and any escape for me cut off; it looked to be that

I must soon show myself and be shot or throw myself to the ground and risk being maimed instead of killed.

As I stood there, now forced to cough in the increasing muck, my eyes smarting from the acrid fumes, I rapidly calculated the remaining time I could survive and saw that it had become a matter of minutes. And it was when I had about made up my mind to bid for the shot that would end all, when, like a hand from Heaven, there came a new force into the drama.

For the tables, then full against me, were suddenly turned in my favor, and the joy of living loomed large as I saw that I might be saved.

I do not pretend to assert that my salvation was in the least due to myself. From the time I had first entered the White Horse I had been through a series of adventures out of which I had pulled unscathed, but my escapes had been due to fortuitous circumstances. I only used the wit Heaven gave me when I took advantage of them.

But at the moment of which I was speaking I had given over hoping, and my heart was beating thickly enough.

Heaven knows the world looked sweet as it lay before me that July morning, and I groaned when I thought that to those who loved me my fate would never be known. I had become desperate and could stand the smoke but a few moments longer, and, as I have said, I was about to present

myself openly at the door, when I heard a shot and a shout, both from a distance, and then from behind the miller's house came a redcoat running.

The shot was followed by two others. I heard the lieutenant call to his men, and in a moment they came running from all directions, forming in line near where Brussel was standing.

Between the thickening folds of smoke I saw the villain, deserted by his guard, run into the house, closely followed by Judge Evers, and the two had barely disappeared when from behind the home-lot buildings there came a body of men advancing in the ragged formation of a skirmish line. They were followed by a larger force, all armed but ununiformed, and halting just long enough to deliver a volley at the waiting British, they raised a wild cry and charged them.

I saw all this and quickly guessed at the state of things. The newcomers were Americans, and they outnumbered the British nigh two to one.

I could make out no more after that, for a great coil of smoke blotted the view, but I heard the shots the redcoats fired in return; I heard shouts, curses, the rattle of metal against metal, and the scuffle of many feet; but I took little heed of these things. The British were fully occupied, and I might possibly escape.

Dropping on my hands and knees I crawled to the trap, threw off the barrels and lifted the cover. A blast of scorching air and a denser roll of smoke

nearly prostrated me and showed me the fire had been started beneath the stairs, which were now impassable.

Dropping the hatch, I staggered back to the open door, but there was no longer an outlook, for the smoke rolled thickly as the fire made rapid headway, its fierce crackling almost drowning other sounds; I could hear an occasional shot, but that was all.

I screamed for help, but my scream was lost in the roar of the flames, and, in a state of desperation, I was about to throw myself to the ground below when I thought of the little door leading out over the shaft of the wind-sails. If I could get to and through it I might crawl along the shaft; possibly I could reach the ground by means of the ladderlike wind-sail.

It was by instinct and the sense of feeling that I came upon the ladder leading to the tiny upper door. I was nearly spent when I reached it, for I held my breath, as does a diver.

I know not how I got up that ladder, but I did realize that if the door was fastened my end had come, for I was bursting from suppressed breathing.

But, thank Heaven, the door fell open at my first kick, and dropping to my knees, I crawled out on the shaft; then, from sudden weakness, was obliged to throw myself along its length and clasp

it for fear of falling to the ground, now forty feet below.

But here the air was pure, the wind being from that side, and I took in great gulps of it, gradually getting back my half-lost consciousness, though still well-nigh helpless from sudden weakness.

But I was soon forced into action; for the fire had begun to eat its way out through the sides of the mill, and directly beneath me I saw a tongue of flame follow a spout of smoke as the old shingles crumpled and blazed under the heat. I could not remain where I was, and with a reeling head and a nauseated stomach I worked myself out to an arm of the wind-sail, and as a great section of the shingle sheathing fell with a crash and a mass of fire shot through the opening, I swung myself to the wing and clambered down its rung-like bracing.

I had almost reached the bottom, then being scarce ten feet from the sod, when the earth and sky seemed to come together; I lost footing and grip, and fell.

I must have been nearly unconscious when I struck the ground, for I did not know when I reached it, though a moment later I felt myself being roughly dragged by the collar, and then I became oblivious of everything.

CHAPTER XXVI

CAPTAIN HICKS

I WAS brought to myself by a rough voice: "Get up here, ye cursed red-backed sneak!" it said, and I opened my eyes to find I was lying on the ground at some distance from the mill, which was now a mass of flames from top to bottom, and I was surrounded by a number of men, not one of whom was in uniform.

And then matters took form in my mind, and I knew the British had been defeated. My stomach was no longer sick, and though weak, my head was steady. I sat up and looked around.

"Up to your feet and march," said one who appeared to be the leader. "Did ye think to sneak away an' let yer fellows do the fighting?"

"I am no British soldier," I said.

"So I might guess by the color of yer cloth," was the reply, followed by a loud guffaw from the listening men; then I saw I was being judged by the remnant of the uniform I wore.

"Nay, sir," said I, "I take it you are from the American camp. And so am I. I was captured at the fight on the hill and have since been in

Boston. I was penned in the mill and would have perished had you not arrived as you did."

"A likely story, indeed, an' ye wearing the color of the king! Dost take me for a fool?"

"Nay, sir," I said, "unless you are willing to condemn a man without fairness."

"Fairness!" he thundered. "Who's to prove your yarn?"

"Take me before General Putnam; he knows me, and —"

"I ought to take ye to the nearest tree an' hang ye with the other — only I'm not so bloodthirsty. If Putnam knows ye I'll give ye the chance to —"

"An' I knows him, sah!" put in a voice. "I swar to him! He ain't no real sojer!"

I turned on my knees to which I had arisen, and saw breaking through the group one whom I at once recognized, albeit I had never seen him in broad daylight. It was Letty's brother — the negro, George — who had jumped from the boat the night I escaped by swimming.

"Yes, sah," he continued, his black eyes snapping, "he was with me, Cap'n, that time I tole you about."

"Stand up," commanded the officer; "we will look into this."

"Investigation is all I ask," I returned. "What has become of the British?"

"All gone save seven past praying for, and two or three we caught. Do you yield yourself?"

"Willingly," I replied; "but I hope you have not overlooked the greatest villain of the lot. He was not in uniform."

"The bulk of the force was driven to their boats, and escaped; so I know nothing of the man ye mean," was the answer. "But we have hanged the miller — he being a blatant Tory, and he shot one of my men in the back as he drank water at the well. We have also his apprentice, found hiding in the house, though as he was suffering from a broken arm he was a non-combatant. Still, I am suspicious of him — he looks little like a miller."

"And have you discovered no lady?" I asked, hoping he had found Louise.

"Ay, the miller's daughter, caught in the garret, where she had locked herself; an' there was the dead body of an officer in the house, along with a wounded lobsterback."

"The last being my work," I put in.

"Well," he returned, "I am going to take George's word for ye, if ye will give yer parole. We are in something of a hurry."

"I will give you my word," I said. "And now, may I ask who you are?"

"I am Captain Hicks, of Ward's command."

"And I am Allan Darcy, of Barrington. I —"

"Darcy, of Barrington!" he exclaimed. "Art the man who made the judge dance from the bench? Faith, I've heard of ye!"

"I had a hand in it," I returned.

"Yes, sah, dat's de name, sah!" put in the negro in unrebuked carelessness of military discipline. "He's Darcy, shore 'nuf. You remember me, sah?"

"I know you well, George, and am heavily in your debt," I replied. "As for that same judge," I continued, "his name is Evers, and by chance he was with this British expedition, and must be somewhere about unless he escaped to the boats. He did not know me. It all seems like a special providence! I am yet dazed by it!"

Hicks held out his hand. "I've seen none lookin' like a judge; but, by the Lord! I be more than pleased to have done ye a sarvice," he said, with a hearty ring in his voice. "We are but a bushwhackin' party," he continued, "an' likely on the same errand as the British, an' by luck we out-numbered them. It was the smoke o' the mill that brought us to this spot. Ye certainly look as though ye had seen hard sarvice. Give me an outline o' what has happened here."

And I did so, growing stronger as I noticed the interest of the group that pressed around us as I talked. I made a graphic picture of all that had happened, going back to where I escaped from the hound, leaving out no detail. When I had finished, the captain gave his leather-covered thigh a resounding slap, and exclaimed:

"By the piper that played before Moses! but

the apprentice can be none other than this same Brussel. And, mayhap, we may yet find his honor, the judge; for in the panic of retreat the lobsterbacks would hardly tarry to save him. Come with me, sir. Come with me."

He led the way toward the miller's house, I walking weakly, still suffering from shock, and Hicks's men trailing behind in absolute disorder. As we passed the mill, the roof, from which the flames were now soaring, fell in with a crash. I shuddered to think what my fate would have been had not the American party arrived as it did; ten minutes' delay would have cost me my life.

This was war, and a fuller realization of it was forced on me in a gruesome fashion as we neared the house, for there, hanging to a tree in front of his own door, was the miller, a stout man whom I had not seen, his body slowly turning with the stretch of the rope.

And on the porch, looking calmly at the swinging figure, stood Brussel and three British regulars, a number of men guarding them, while on the grass lay a row of dead men, not all in uniform.

I turned from the last and met the eye of my enemy. He had acted unconcernedly up to then, and had I not appeared, the chances are that he would have been set free; but he lost his air of ease as he saw me. I thought the man would fall backward, he was so staggered at my advent, undoubtedly believing me to have perished. I did

not taunt him, but walking up to him and looking him in the eye, I said:

“By Heaven’s grace, Hotfoot, the tables are turned again! Where is Louise Selden?”

Instead of answering he stared blankly at me, his lips moving. It was Captain Hicks who brought him to his senses.

“Speak up, man, or take a place alongside yon swinger. Ye are a British officer and in disguise. Are ye not a spy?”

“Nay, I am not,” cried Brussel, recovering himself. “Neither am I within your lines.”

“Ye are Captain Brussel?”

“I am Captain Brussel.”

“Where is the girl?”

“Within the house — or was.”

“How long since?” I demanded, in wonder.

“For three days.”

“Then how did I hear her in the mill?” I queried, speaking more to myself than to him; but he heard me and answered:

“I know not; I heard nothing of her! You took me by surprise, else we might have compromised this matter and —”

“Compromise, you villain!” I thundered. “There is but one way to compromise with thee!” And I turned from him.

“Are you going to have me hanged offhand and with no trial?” he said, an appeal in his voice.

“Do you forget the hound?” I retorted.

"Nay, then," put in Hicks. "The thing is not yet plain to me. I will put ye on your honor not to attempt to escape or do violence while with us, and ye will return with us without trouble. Do ye accept the conditions?"

"Ay, I am but a prisoner of war."

"Yer standing will be settled elsewhere," said Hicks. "Mr. Darcy, come inside. I think ye have business up-stairs. She is in the front room, sir, and I hardly believe ye need my company."

He smiled grimly as he spoke.

I knew what he meant, and turning my back on Brussel, I hurried into the little building and up the narrow stairway to the front chamber.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE CLIMAX

LOUISE was there. She was sitting on the edge of a bed, wan and listless, her hands folded loosely, her long hair streaming over her shoulders, and was far from being like the beauty I had known, though I was well aware then, as I have since proved, that the glory of her sun was but dimmed by the cloud of circumstance. There she sat, the woman who had saved my life, and was yet to rule it, and she was all unconscious of my presence. She turned as she heard some one coming, and when she at first saw me she shrank back, an expression of horror crossing her face. But in a moment she knew, having a woman's instinct, and with a bubbling cry she opened wide her still lovely eyes and held out her arms to me, just as a frightened child might have done.

I am afraid I took advantage of that moment of weakness. I know that time passed without my noticing it, and I came to a realizing sense of things when Hicks hailed me from the foot of the stairs. "Hi, Darcy!" he cried. "We have the judge, I think. We found him burrowing in the hayloft

in the barn. Come down as soon as may be, an' put yer mark on him. He's a sorry sight."

I saw Judge Evers later, and he recognized me when I brought myself to his attention. Indeed he was a sorry sight, and almost a mirth-provoking one, but he abated not a jot of his dignity though he was hatless, wigless and covered with hay, cob-webs and dust. For a space he ranted at me in lofty language, assuring me that I would yet weight a gallows, but I had nothing to say to him in return, only identifying him as a king's civil officer.

"A damned uncivil one, to my mind!" said Hicks. "But he'll make a good exchange for some one, no doubt! He was with the enemy, an' so I'll hold him."

But in the meantime I had heard part of the girl's story.

"I was utterly hopeless," she said, as I held her close to me. "I knew he had brought me here to get rid of me — even as he once tried to get rid of you — for I had told him I was going to General Gage and state my case. After that he made no pretensions.

"He told me you were dead — that he had seen your body. I don't know why he selected this place, but I do know that he was on leave, and I learned that the miller was an old friend of his — and a brute, swearing he would starve me if I did not consent to marry Brussel. And Brussel prom-



She held out her arms to me, just as a frightened child might have done

ised to go from me and not see me again from the moment we were married, if I so wished. He was about to kidnap me once before — the time I escaped with you. When the second party came I was taken to the garret and locked in, and —”

“Then how did I hear you calling me in the mill?” I interrupted.

“I know not — but I did call you — why, I don’t know, believing you dead, but I remember it.” She turned crimson as she confessed.

“It will forever be an inscrutable mystery,” I said, and gathered her close.

It was high noon when Captain Hicks and his force, together with his prisoners, were assembled on the north shore of Hog Island. There is but a channel separating the island from the mainland, and this is no more than a quarter of a mile wide, though through it the tides race like a sluice, and it was now a raging torrent, the last of the flood coming inward with a rush.

A number of cattle gathered by the raiders were bunched on the shore, waiting for the tide to turn, and the boats which were to guide them were drawn up, their crews ready for the word to move.

I stood on a rock overhanging the water with Louise at my side. Brussel, being on parole, was not guarded and stood some ten paces from us gazing sulkily at the diminishing rush of water; beyond him and seated in a boat were the British

prisoners, closely guarded. The dead had been buried.

For me fortune seemed as high as the sun, and I could conceive of no danger threatening me at that time. Within a few hours I hoped to be on my way to the home of Louise, and later to my own home with her as my wife.

It was a rosy picture we drew as we stood together. For the tenth time I was telling her of my adventures in Boston, adding to each recital some forgotten detail, and was just describing how I obtained and where concealed her money, when I became conscious that Brussel had drawn near and was intently listening to my words.

I ceased speaking, and he at once stepped up to me, his face white with suppressed rage.

“ You are a thief! ” he said, the words hissing from between his set teeth. I laughed in his face — I could well afford to.

“ You think you have won over me, ” he went on in a low, menacing voice. “ You are mistaken. This woman is off my hands, thank Heaven! ”

“ Be careful, sir, ” I said meaningly.

“ What have I to fear? ” he returned. “ I am a prisoner of war. I will be exchanged, and then my uncle’s money which you have stolen, buried, and kindly located for me will find its owner. I am my uncle’s heir. But mayhap you have lied about his death. ”

I was astonished at this outbreak. I had

thought the man thoroughly cowed, but I was mistaken; he was bitterly rancorous, though as a paroled prisoner he was hardly to be considered dangerous for the present. But his allusion to Louise angered me, and I thought I had a way to make him wilt.

“Hotfoot,” I returned, with a careless laugh, “as a prisoner of war you may be exchanged; with that I have nothing to do; but that you will never rejoin your regiment save to be drummed out of it in disgrace, and imprisoned as a forger, you may be certain. You would not care for the reception you would receive in Boston.”

“And why not?” he asked.

“Because, sir,” I said, speaking easily, “when I had the fortune to rifle your uncle’s strong box I discovered a note drawn by Colonel Dalrymple, endorsed by you, and marked a forgery across its face. Do you comprehend?

“As soon as I return to our lines I shall make it my business to transmit that paper to Colonel Dalrymple, with a few words in explanation of how I came by it, also relating the conversation I overheard between Dench and you.

“Now, you villain,” I concluded, having worked myself into something of a heat, “you see how I can and will make an end of you without further soiling my hands. This may teach you not to insult a lady.”

The man had stood listening, his face set save

for his twitching lips, and I knew I was causing him agony. For a moment he stood immovable, then in a quiet voice he asked:

“Where is that note?”

I tapped my chest.

“Right here, Hotfoot.”

For I had that and the other appropriated papers in my waistcoat — and fortunately in that garment, as the coat I had thrown off in the mill had been destroyed. The words were hardly out of my mouth when Brussel made a grasp for my waistcoat, which was loosened owing to the heat of the day; his hand was fairly in the inside pocket ere I was aware of what he was after, but I caught his wrist and held him before his fingers could close on the papers.

He was too desperate to let his attempt go as a failure, and instead of breaking away and retreating, he jerked his wrist free of my grasp, and catching me by the throat, put one foot behind me and forced me over the edge of the rock on which I was standing.

His move was sudden and unanticipated by me. I felt myself falling, but was too far gone to recover, though not so far but that I might carry Brussel with me, and as I heard Louise shriek I caught the officer by his wounded arm. The next moment we both toppled into the racing tide sweeping by the rock.

If ever I was insane from anger I was at the

moment I plunged under water, the air-bubbles carried with us roaring in my ears. Down we went, rolling over and over, and I knew we were being swept along at a rapid rate. And I feared I would drown ere I could shake off the man's hold on my throat, but I managed it at last though I thought his grip would tear it open. Once free of him, I came up gasping for air, but Brussel was nowhere in sight. I had been carried along several rods ere I reached the shore and scrambled up the rocks, where I fell exhausted.

In a moment Captain Hicks came running to me, and in a few words I told him what had happened.

"The man has broken his parole!" he shouted. "Look for him to rise," he yelled to the guard.

At that moment I caught a glimpse of Brussel. He was two hundred feet up the channel and was rapidly being swept along as with one hand he made his slow way toward the opposite shore. I pointed at the swimming man, and Hicks caught sight of him. Turning to one of his company who had run up, he said quietly:

"Can ye pot him, Simon?"

The man made no answer, but stepping forward, dropped on one knee beside me, cocked his long rifle, and took deliberate aim at the small mark made by Brussel's moving head.

Then he fired.

I saw my old enemy rise until his waist-line was

visible, then he threw both hands above his head and disappeared.

“ You have saved him much future suffering,” I said, speaking as if I were not shocked, and then I saw Louise running toward me.

Her eyes were wide with horror as she came up to me, and before the whole company she threw herself into my wet arms.

“ God’s will be done!” said Hicks, “ but this is a fair ending to a bit of tragedy. Come, lads; I think we may go.”

Now, to you who have been interested enough to follow my fortunes, and the tribulations which tried my soul, to you, I say: you may read the history of the brave doings of the patriots around Boston in those old days of strife and hatred; and you will see that mine was no uncommon courage; only that my body being big, I could stand more than most men. You can read of Gage, of Evers, of Putnam, Loring, Crean Bush, the lowest of the low, and others, and learn, too, that all virtue, truth and honesty are not confined to one side.

And so I take my leave of you, after the fashion of the town-crier, with —

“ GOD BLESS THE COMMONWEALTH.”

THE END

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